

A: Really? That is extremely interesting! It would be a most unmistakable political signal to the U.S. Theoretically, of course, Saudi contacts with the Soviets or other communists are forbidden, but that is not really effective. There are people in Saudi Arabia, but Prince Saud is not one of them, who want closer relations with the USSR. Why? Because they want leverage with the U.S. They say: "The U.S. takes us for granted, thinks we are congenitally anti-Communist. Why can't we establish links with the USSR while keeping close Western ties?"

Carter May Make A Deal With The Russians

The following is an interview with the U.S. Mideast analyst:

Q: What is your impression of the consolidation of Soviet-Arab ties?

A: An Arab swing to the Russians will always follow any worsening in the Mideast situation. The problem is that the Egyptians, if they do not get military aid from the USSR, will be ineffective militarily for years. They can't really shift to the West in practical terms. And the Russians are desperate for hard currency, and therefore may be more flexible with the Gulf states who can provide them with some petrodollars.

Q: What about Israel?

A: My impression is that it's amateur night in Washington, when it comes to the Middle East. Now, without the Democratic Movement for Change, Likud will take a hard line, and there will be virtually no chances of negotiations. Therefore, the U.S. has no leverage, either economically or militarily, with Israel. If the U.S. cannot move there — and I do not see what they can do — then our whole deal is going to fall through. Then, it's a free-for-all...The Egyptians are trying to shift toward the Soviets. I think that the Carter Administration will try to seek an arrangement with the Russians to stop this drift. You know, there is a permanent U.S.-Soviet commission on the Middle East that was set up by Vance in Geneva last month.

Q: But the Soviets may seek a deal with the West Europeans instead and try to shut the U.S. out of the Middle East.

A: I don't know, but if Washington felt that was in the works, then there would be real panic. Real panic.

The following is an interview with PLO Foreign Affairs minister Farouk Kaddoumi from the Italian daily Corriere della Sera:

We will not lose our heads. If the Israelis want to be governed by fanatics, it is their business. Israeli extremism will not produce Palestinian extremism. The refusal of Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories will not lead us to ask for the whole of Palestine. We have a defined position, which is to ask for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip...

The situation is sliding dangerously. The political situation requires an energetic action from the U.S.A., whose responsibilities are growing. The U.S. must not limit itself to general interest but must act. Every country that will be affected by a Middle East war must act, such as the Europeans.

Israel is not going for peace. We thus need to deepen our relations with the Soviet Union. This has been the main target of Arafat since he met Brezhnev in Moscow to establish closer cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with a PLO official in Rome published in the Italian Communist daily L'Unita:

Is the U.S. still working on the basis of the Kissinger diplomacy, which is to create a crisis and then to mediate it? Is the U.S. willing to have a fifth Israeli-Arab war before starting another round of step-by-step diplomacy? I cannot answer, but one thing is sure: We, the PLO, want peace.

The spokesman stressed that the PLO is seeking to bring the Soviets and Arabs closer together.

Menachem Begin: Monkeywrench In The Mideast

ISRAEL

Matti Golan, author of the *Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger* and the journalist instrumental in felling Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, has aptly summed up the response of the Carter Administration to the new Likud government of Menachem Begin: "The U.S. doesn't like Begin and will try to topple him," writes Golan in the liberal daily *Ha'aretz*, known to reflect the views of war-

hawk Moshe Dayan. And says Golan, "The U.S. knows how to topple governments."

For all his dogmatic positions, Begin himself represents a formidable obstacle to the Carter Administration and its Rockefeller controllers. For one, "Begin hates Kissinger's guts," revealed a Mideast insider. "He is violently opposed to a return to step-by-step diplomacy."

Second, although Begin is not likely to jump into a Mediterranean peace pact with the Arabs and Soviets, the Likud leader, who is by no means under the thumb of the White House, has the option of striking a deal with the

Soviets, the Europeans, and the Arabs; if he is able to successfully overcome the subversive influence of Rockefeller agent Dayan. The release last week of an energy policy by the Likud-linked Zionist Organization of America shows that that option is by no means ruled out. The statement called for expanded nuclear energy development, acknowledging Soviet superiority in energy research over the U.S.' dismal nuclear energy program.

Third, the Begin regime puts U.S. relations with Israel in an awkward position. Some Mideast observers are forecasting that Washington will act to get rid of Begin since support for a Likud government in Israel will drive the Persian Gulf and Arab nations straight to the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, top Likud leaders, including Ezer Weizman, Dayan's brother-in-law, have projected the possibility of a U.S.-Israel military alliance against the Soviets and Arabs. *Pravda*, the Soviet daily, warned June 12: "The Likud bloc hopes for the support of those circles in the U.S. who are interested in preserving a continuing hotspot of tension in the Middle East." The National Security Council-deployed Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the American Jewish Lobby, has been publicly pressing the Carter Administration to accept Israel's hardline position.

Begin Asserts Independence

The Carter Administration worries over the Begin reg-

ime could not have been assuaged by Begin's announcement this week that Brzezinski associate Yigal Yadin, archaeologist and head of the Democratic Movement for Change, will not be part of the Begin cabinet. Yadin, not as dependent on his following and his party members, as Begin, is considered freer to carry out explicit Rockefeller policies.

In another unexpected move, Begin made clear that General Ariel Sharon, a warhawk associate of Dayan, will not hold the super-cabinet post of Coordinator for Internal Security, but will instead become Agriculture Minister.

In addition, Begin's closest political ally Shmuel Katz arrived in the U.S. this week on a mission, he said, to clarify Likud policy from the reports of that policy in the *New York Times*. According to Katz, Begin intends to adopt economic and other policies that will make Israel less dependent on the U.S. Katz unequivocally termed the step-by-step diplomacy as leading to the destruction of Israel. This contradicts the recent claim in *Ha'aretz* that "only a renewal of the step-by-step diplomacy of Kissinger can avoid a new war in the region." Katz strongly attacked Carter for interfering, and blocking, the Likud's effort for Arab-Israeli negotiations with his provocative talk of homelands and refugee compensation.

Lebanon Crisis Builds

The unresolved political situation in Lebanon seriously worsened this week, as Israeli units and Israeli-backed Lebanese extremists launched new attacks in the south of Lebanon. *Al Baath*, official daily of Syria's ruling Baath Party, warned June 13 that the Israelis are readying a preemptive strike against the Arab states through southern Lebanon. According to the next day's *Christian Science Monitor*, Syrian Foreign Ministry officials are expecting an "all-out push by Israel into the Arkoub regions." Special Israeli engineering units have begun to build roads and communication networks towards the strategically vital Arkoub region in southeastern Lebanon, at the same time that Israeli forces and their rightist allies shelled numbers of villages in the south, including forays toward the central town of Nabatiyeh.

Israeli leaders have expanded contacts with rightist Lebanese leaders, in one case conducting a secret meeting on the island of Cyprus. Israel's likely next Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman, recently met with Bechir Gemayel, son of Falange Party leader Pierre Gemayel.

Lebanese fascist militiamen have also reportedly received special training in Israel, a deployment coinciding with the activation of fascist networks in Europe for fighting in Lebanon. The Greek Communist Party newspaper *Rizospastis* reports that several hundred West German mercenaries have recently surfaced in the southern Lebanese fighting.

In a June 15 dispatch from Beirut, Cuba's *Prensa Latina* news agency reported a "steady intensification"

of the fighting in Lebanon over the prior 48 hours and assessed that a major crisis was virtually inevitable during the next few days. *Prensa Latina* cited a report appearing in Kuwait's *Al Qabas* newspaper that the U.S. ambassadors to Syria and Egypt are aware that Israel is planning aggression into southern Lebanon.

To deal with the crisis, Palestine Liberation Organization External Affairs Minister Farouk Kaddoumi rushed to Egypt from Italy June 14 for meetings with the Egyptian leadership. Before leaving Rome, Kaddoumi stressed to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* "If the Israelis want to elect a fanatic to head their government, that's their business... Israeli extremism won't lead to Palestinian extremism."

Syrian Dilemma

Israel's actions have caused grave dilemmas for Syrian President Hafez Assad. If he sends his army into southern Lebanon, Israel will regard this as a violation of the "red line" limitation placed by Israel upon Syrian troop movements and will undoubtedly strike directly at Syrian territory. (Syrian failure to act will allow Israel to continue its operations.) Syria has wanted to stabilize Lebanon by establishing set Palestinian strongholds in the South.

Assad is under intense pressure to do *something*. The Syrian economy has been badly depleted by the costs of maintaining an occupying army in Lebanon and various army factions are fearful lest the 30,000 soldiers in Lebanon detract from Syria's ability to defend its vulnerable