

But the Carter regime is not prepared to accept the military facts of Soviet strategic superiority and the danger of general war. Instead, a wild campaign of bombings, terror, assassination and blackmail swept the Middle East this week — coordinated by the NSC, Interpol, and Israeli Intelligence — aimed at destabilizing moderate Arab leaders and Israel's Begin to block what appears to be a healthy momentum toward reconvening the Geneva Conference by October 10.

The Begin-Sadat Exchange

Since last week, the leaders of both Israel and Egypt have been dropping broad hints that they would support the convening of a Geneva conference, despite behind-the-scenes pressure from the Carter crowd to drop the idea. Begin proposed October 10 as a date, and Sadat responded by saying, "We will be ready then and even sooner." Begin commended Sadat for refusing to engage

in polemical attacks and instead thinking seriously about peace. The exchange won the praise of Italian Foreign Minister Arnaldo Forlani, who saw a chance for peace developing.

Then, three days ago, the Egyptian War Minister Gamassi sent a letter to Begin concerning routine matters concerning the ceasefire in the Sinai peninsula in the first direct Israeli-Egyptian contact since the period immediately after the October 1973 war. At that time, Gamassi had a series of quiet talks with Israeli officials — until Kissinger intervened to break up the direct contacts and install himself as manipulative "mediator."

The series of Israeli-Egyptian exchanges, which has considerably eased the overall level of Arab-Israeli tension, are surprising in light of the supposed role of Begin as a "fanatic hardliner." But, according to inside sources, the Likud government in Israel is relatively

Dayan Will Be 'High-Stakes Gambler' In Dealings With Arabs

The following interview was held with a leading strategist at the Brookings Institution:

Q: Isn't Carter's policy toward the Palestinians, which he is coordinating with Israel, threatening a full-scale confrontation with the Arabs and Soviets?

A: Look, with the new Begin government in power, all the old ideas Carter had about a comprehensive solution in the Mideast are virtually out the window. The Administration has a choice: impose a solution or go back to step-by-step. For the latter, it is noteworthy that Mr. Dayan will in fact be Israel's chief negotiator on U.S.-Israeli issues. This means that Begin, while here, will only discuss principles. He'll spend his time explaining the differences between his approach and that of the former Administration and will leave the details to his chief negotiator.

Then, Dayan will come in with detailed strategic assumptions. His concentration will be on Egypt. He will give the Egyptians the choice of accepting most of the Sinai back without a new war, and will signal to Sadat that he need not go back to the Soviets. He knows that Egypt is confronted with difficult internal social-political-financial realities. He knows that Egyptians are sick and tired of the conflict, so he figures, why relieve Sadat of his domestic troubles? And Dayan will have a similar approach ready for the Syrians.

And a deal will be ready for Jordan, involving full open bridges between the two countries, Palestinians elected to the Jordanian Parliament. Dayan knows that Jordan is already present on the West Bank, and wants Israel to be allowed to continue to settle the West Bank. Dayan wants to go for a provisional agreement until the Arabs are ready to go for real peace.

Q: Won't any attempt to get Sadat to desert the

PLO create enormous problems for him internally?

A: Of course, of course! But Dayan is saying, I don't care what Sadat sticks to, that's Sadat's problem. If Sadat wants to fight for the sake of the PLO, Israel is ready. Egypt really has a problem: it went very far towards the U.S., it is dependent on U.S. and Saudi aid. It's not easy now for Sadat to simply cable Brezhnev and say that the rift is over, to say, "Here I am, your obedient servant Sadat, back in the fold." Sadat has enormous difficulties, and Dayan is capitalizing on this.

It is very difficult for the Egyptians, but they may go along with this if Syria goes along too. Meanwhile, the Israelis will make all sorts of demands to neutralize the Arabs. This is a high-stakes game, and in it you have to ask yourself, what are Egypt's domestic problems, what is the status of the Egyptian army, and so on.

Q: It seems ridiculous to think Syria will go along with this, Assad is already so unstable at home...

A: That's not important! The real key is whether Egypt will be willing to join in an Iraq-Syria front. Israel's strategy since 1973 has been to take Egypt out of the conflict and make the country more American-affiliated. The Israelis now ask: what will Egypt do, muddle through, or go to war? It's very difficult for the Egyptians. After the 1967 war, obviously, there were no other alternatives. But now? Sadat has to ask himself, what do we say to the Egyptian masses? After all, he thinks, "We started this thing up with the Americans." So, again, are the Egyptians ready to go to war if they can retrieve Sinai without a shot?

Dayan is a gambler, a high-stakes gambler, he thinks fatalistically, like the Arabs do, he's inclined to accept a gamble insofar as it is dictated by its goals. He doesn't answer to others when he's determined to do something.