

# Dayan Activates Israel's First Strike Option

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, and the British-controlled Zionist Lobby in the U.S. are now trying to panic the Israeli government over the State Department's announced policy of selling arms to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Also at issue is Secretary of State Vance's Feb. 10 declaration, which was subsequently backed up by the Carter Administration, telling Israel that withdrawal from the Sinai settlements, the West Bank, and Gaza is a necessary requisite for a Middle East peace accord.

The Dayan-Sharon operation is aimed at boxing Prime Minister Menachem Begin into an intransigent, breakaway-ally mode that will preclude Israeli cooperation with U.S. mediation efforts and prevent the consolidation of an overall peace settlement. The goal of Dayan—and London—is to set the stage for a separate peace between Israel and Egypt, which would serve to heighten Cold War tensions in the region.

According to CBS radio, the Israelis are again activating their preemptive strike option to counter the "growing Arab war threat" created, they charge, by the sale of U.S. arms to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. An aide to Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) justified Israel's search for "all possible options," including the nuclear option, in response to the U.S. policy moves.

## Press Spread War-Line

*A front-page article by Michael Parks in the Feb. 15 Baltimore Sun reports from Jerusalem that the expectation of war is spreading in Israel, tied into growing support for Dayan's advocacy of using Israel's nuclear option to counter the Arabs' arsenal:*

Three months after President Anwar el Sadat's historic trip to Jerusalem, many Israelis feel that the Middle East conflict has returned to the same stalemate that had preceded his visit, and talk among Israelis is now as much of the "next war" as prospects for a peace settlement.

Initial goodwill has been replaced by the old suspicions of Arab willingness to live in peace, and one newspaper recalled the warning of Lt. Gen. Mordechai Gur, the Israel defense forces chief of staff, that the Sadat initiative would probably prove to be a trick.

Israel's determination to put its security and survival above all, even a chance for peace, will lead the government to accelerate its strategic reassessment with

prospects far greater now that Israel will decide to rely on a nuclear deterrent in the future.

Some Israeli strategists, including Moshe Dayan before he became foreign minister, had already concluded that Israel could not be sure of decisively defeating Arab forces as their arsenals expanded over the next three or four years, cutting Israel's qualitative edge. Now, Israeli political analysts are concluding that Jerusalem cannot depend on Washington to guarantee its security in all future settlements.

The Begin government still stands by the pledge of previous governments here, spokesmen said yesterday, that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East conflict, though the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency says it has had such arms for more than a decade and was ready to use them in the 1973 war. But arguments are now being worked out to justify such a move as a response to Iraq's rapidly developing nuclear capability.

*Echoing this line, the Feb. 12 Sunday Times of London, in a long feature entitled "Now That Sadat Has Failed," notes that Carter is incapable of pressuring Israel because of their nuclear option. The article, which is excerpted below, puts forth the notion that an Israeli first strike remains a live option:*

Mr. Begin's insistence on planting new settlements in the Sinai and the West Bank and his prevarications about their number and nature are a provocation of the U.S. as well as the Arabs and are foolhardy in the extreme if Israel's survival depends in any measure on the U.S. The more plausible explanation is the converse—that Israel's survival now rests on the possession of, and the determination *in extremis* to use, the ultimate response.

Here then are two reasonably rational conclusions: first, that there is no prospect of an Arab-Israeli peace settlement and, secondly, that in the consequent belligerent situation, one side has and may use nuclear weapons... (Possession of nuclear weaponry) makes—would make—Israel a truly independent state which can dictate to others from the frontiers it is to have.

Neither the Americans nor the Russians are going to use nuclear weapons except as a result of conflict mismanagement. For them nuclear hostilities entail national destruction, an act of suicidal despair. But for Israel the question is national survival—and in that context, everything goes.

## Dayan Boxes In Begin

*In an interview in the New York Times, Dayan, who has just finished touring the U.S. to rally support for his hardline, 'no-concessions-to-Egypt' policies, announced that "Israel has substantial reservations now about the present (U.S.) Administration's role in objectively mediating" the Israel-Egypt talks. Dayan's role as saboteur was pinpointed by one well-briefed Mideast analyst:*

It is expected that Dayan will play the same blackmail game that he played in October when he undercut the joint Soviet-U.S. communiqué. Dayan will use every force that he can muster against the pro-Arab forces in the U.S. Administration. His trip to the U.S. makes that clear. Dayan will threaten to activate Israel's "breakaway" option and at the same time he will mobilize the Jewish Lobby to move Carter away from Sadat and toward Israel.

*Another source described Dayan's operation to encircle Begin and, by manipulating his psychological weaknesses, force him into dropping the quest for a comprehensive settlement.*

Dayan has profiled Begin very well and he plays upon his ideological beliefs. The situation with Begin has reached a very sensitive phase, and no one knows how the Prime Minister is planning to get out. Defense Minister Weizman is fighting to keep some kind of leverage over Begin, but Weizman himself is not in a strong position.

## Weizman Smooths Negotiations

*Weizman, a close ally of Begin for years, is personally spearheading efforts against the joint Dayan-Sharon drive to make an issue of the settlements dominant in the Middle East. The Defense Minister is trying to organize support for Begin to accommodate Sadat in order to clear the way for expanded regional peace talks. For this effort, Weizman is being attacked by the fanatic ideologues within Begin's own Herut Party while facing other obstructions from Dayan and Sharon, thus narrowing his maneuvering room. However, Weizman maintains strong ties with several European and U.S. military factions, which, if they lend him the critical support that he now needs, could turn the tide against the Dayanists.*

*Last week, Weizman countermanded an announcement by Sharon that new settlements would be established and old settlements expanded in northern Sinai, by ordering a total freeze on settlements. Weizman called the settlements "politically harmful" and demanded a government review of settlements policy, currently Sharon's personal domain. Sharon, in an interview, expressed "surprise" at Weizman's action and charged him with not clearing the move with the Cabinet. Weizman responded by stating that he had cleared everything with Begin himself!*

*Largely as a result of Weizman's positive pressure, Begin has backed away somewhat from his initial outburst against the United States following the Vance statement in an effort to smooth relations with the U.S. In a speech before the Israeli Knesset, Begin reaffirmed the importance of Israel-U.S. ties, while the French daily Le Matin of Feb. 14 blamed the whole Israel-U.S. crisis on Dayan:*

During the press conference given by Begin on Monday, Begin did only one thing and that was to attempt to lower the tension between the U.S. and Israel that had been caused by his Foreign Minister Dayan. Begin reaffirmed the profound friendship with the U.S., despite any differences.

Moshe Dayan precipitated the crisis between the U.S. and Israel. One can only believe that he left for Washington with the sole purpose to push confrontation. On his way, he started out by saying that Israel was delivering arms to Ethiopia. He then chided the American Jewish leaders by saying that their role should only be unconditional support of Israel and that they were not to play mediator. Finally, he made it a point of emphasizing that his country would continue the settlements.

He answered Vance's recent statement by saying that the U.S. had gone over to Egypt's side and demanded that Begin act as strongly as possible because the U.S. administration was about to apply pressure on Israel.

Begin then called the American ambassador and made known to him in the coolest of terms that he was angry about U.S. betrayal.

The next day, the Israeli government accepted Begin's statement, but not without some difficulty coming from Weizman, Yadin and some liberals, who said that Vance's statement was only a reaffirmation of the American policy. Then a battle began between Sharon and Weizman with Sharon accusing Weizman of ordering the cessation of settlements in the Sinai while he was in Cairo. Weizman said that he had made the decision after having conferred with Begin.

Finally, on Monday, Begin received some clarifications from Carter who told him that this was and has always been American policy and would help Sadat to continue his negotiations. Begin then said that there was still friendship between the two countries, thus giving the U.S. the green light to continue the mediating process.

## Begin Urged To Act

*However, unless Begin begins to act more aggressively against the saboteurs of peace, it appears likely that his hold over the reins of power will falter. According to the French daily Le Figaro of Feb. 14:*

Mr. Begin is in the government but not in power. The battle of communiqués between Weizman and Sharon regarding the Sinai settlements could be made into a humorous anecdote if it were not a sign that the authority of the Prime Minister over his governmental coalition were not in question.

*A commentary in the Feb. 9 Jerusalem Post by Mark Segal entitled "Shenanigans at Shilo" issues an urgent call to move against Sharon now.*

Sharon has embarrassed the Likud government on previous occasions—particularly by his declarations on settlement policy, over which Begin put him in charge. If Begin thought he could thereby neutralize a potentially dangerous man, then he was proven by events to be as mistaken in his judgment as former Premier Rabin, who sought to still Sharon's sharp criticism of the army command by appointing him his special adviser.

A small minority cannot be allowed to dictate policy to an entire nation, for that way lies anarchy. Mr. Begin should put his foot down and show he is in charge.

### Lebanon Flare-up

*The latest outburst of fighting in Lebanon provoked by right-wing extremist and ex-president Camille*

*Chamoun, whom Sadat described as a "life-long British agent" in an interview in October magazine, is leveraging the war-mongering efforts of Dayan and Sharon. Exacerbating the situation, Israeli military leaders linked to the Dayan network are renewing Israel's commitments to "defend our besieged Christian brothers across the border" against the Palestinian-Syrian threat. Ominously, Israeli armed forces chiefs, including Weizman, held meetings at the Lebanon-Israel border last week to discuss Israeli aid to the right-wing forces, one day before the commander of the southern Lebanese right-wing forces, Maj. Saad Haddad, called for a "Christian government in exile" so that Syria's military actions could be labeled an invasion of a sovereign entity. According to Christian sources cited by the Feb. 13 Jerusalem Post, "this is the only way the Syrians can be expelled."*

## Arafat And Fatah Faction Encourage PLO Moderation

The leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the central command of the Lebanese leftist national movement held a joint meeting chaired by PLO chief Yasser Arafat on Feb. 1 to discuss the continued tensions in southern Lebanon. Two important decisions taken at that meeting reflect the efforts on the part of the moderate faction within the PLO to change the image of the organization from that of being terrorist to that of a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people for future Mideast peace negotiations.

Firstly, the PLO vowed to "clean out" the anarchists and extremists within its ranks in the south of Lebanon. These elements have sparked repeated conflicts with the Christian Falange in the area — conflicts which have threatened to bring direct Israeli intervention on the side of the Christians.

Secondly, the PLO declared that the majority of its guerrilla strongholds in southern Lebanon will be vacated and relinquished to the Lebanese leftist national front. These strongholds include, significantly, PLO offices in the coastal cities of Sidon, a center of strong leftist presence during the Lebanese civil war, and Tyre, the port where weapons have been shipped to the PLO. As well, Palestinian guerrillas are to withdraw from

Nabatiyeh, a site of continued conflict with the Falange since the end of the civil war in 1976.

The decision to end the PLO's longstanding military presence in southern Lebanon is significant for two reasons. Most importantly, it is a clear signal to Israel that the responsible wing of the PLO and Fatah (the central commando organization within the PLO) is not interested in continuing terrorist activities against Israel, but want to negotiate peace. Secondly, the gesture reduces the likelihood of a flareup in the volatile area which could easily draw in Syrian occupying troops, and trigger a new Arab-Israeli war.

A week after the joint meeting on southern Lebanon, a spokesman from the PLO, Said Kamal, urged the United States to adopt a clear and positive stand toward the Palestinian cause. Kamal, a leading PLO moderate from Cairo, urged the U.S. as a superpower to shoulder a special responsibility to the Palestinian cause — a signal that the PLO wants to open official negotiations with Washington. The same day, reports from the Qatar News Agency indicated that the Fatah command was requesting that the Iraqi government hand over Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal who has been implicated in the murder of leading Palestinian moderate Said Hammami last month in London.