

average man in the street in Cairo might want such an arrangement, the leadership in Egypt is solidly behind an overall framework for a solution. They know that they cannot be so clear-eyed and eager for peace overnight.

Furthermore, there may be some anti-Palestinian noise coming out of Egypt now but believe me I would be shocked if Sadat really departed from his support for the Palestinians in the context of a settlement. The Palestinian role is Sadat's fig leaf, he needs them as much as they need him. The thing to keep in mind now is that Sadat is popping mad at what happened at Larnaca. He's mad at the Cypriots and at his own boys. But that doesn't change his fundamental position on the terms for peace.

Also keep in mind that the Saudis and other moderate Arabs including King Hussein know that any break with the Palestinian cause would polarize the Arab world, pitting radical against moderate, which the Saudis want nothing to do with.

SADAT WON'T SELLOUT PALESTINIANS

Corroborating this analysis is an interview with an Egyptian banking official who also dismisses the separate peace option for Egypt.

Q: Do you think Sadat is being forced into an isolated position after the Larnaca incident which might have some eventual connection to a separate peace?

A: Absolutely not. If Sadat sold out on the Palestinian question, he would be overthrown in 24 hours. Sadat knows what the basic demands of the Arab world are: Palestinian self-determination and return of the occupied territories. Any Arab leader knows that Sadat cannot make concessions on these two issues. Besides Yasser Arafat and Anwar Sadat are very close friends.

War In Israel Over Separate Peace

A group of leaders in Israel's ruling Likud coalition and in the opposition Labour Party are engineering a cross-party destabilization of the government of Prime Minister Begin. Their aim is to weaken Begin's centralized leadership and build a national consensus for a separate peace with Egypt rather than a comprehensive regional settlement.

ISRAEL

Said one Israeli source, "Any number of issues could divide and wreck the Begin coalition." A break, he said, could come through the defection of Cabinet members belonging to the pro-Labour faction of the Democratic Movement for Change, several of whose leaders are close to U.S. National Security chief Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The forces around Begin currently include Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich, and Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai, and the Labour Party group around former Foreign Minister Abba Eban. This group seeks to get the peace talks with Egypt back on track as a crucial step toward expanded regional negotiations, and to continue the power of Israel's extremists and Dayan's intelligence-military networks.

In special Cabinet sessions called by Weizman to end Israel's controversial policy of establishing settlements in Arab lands, Dayan has blocked against Weizman with expansionist Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon and with extremist ideologues such as Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education and former head of the fanatic Gush Emunim group. At the same time, Dayan has adopted a profoundly "pessimistic" posture on the possibilities of regional peace talks and has charged both Egyptian President Sadat and Jordan's King Hussein with "intransigence." Dayan is fueling a mood in Israel that only a Kissinger-like "interim arrangement" with Egypt can succeed.

Yet, remarkably, Dayan suddenly announced before Israel's Parliament Feb. 22 that the government should make "substantial changes" in its policy in regard to the Palestinians and that the Palestinian issue was the "core" of the difficulties in the current negotiations—a 180 degree shift in position! London's *Financial Times* Feb. 23 described Dayan's statements as "extraordinary" and "in conflict" with Begin's positions.

The logic behind this double game is Dayan's hope to create an axis with Labour Party chief Simon Peres, who has been making moderate-sounding statements since his meeting in Europe last week with Sadat. The meeting, arranged for social democrat Peres by Second International leader and Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, was, in fact, an attempt to entrap Sadat into looking to "the moderate" Labourites over the "intransigent" Begin. The trap is having its effect. In an interview with Egypt's *October* magazine last weekend, Sadat said he regretted that Labourite Golda Meir, who unlike Begin is a staunch supporter of the British, was no longer Israeli Prime Minister.

The Labour Party is simultaneously conducting a number of campaigns against Begin's "lack of leadership." Labour ideologue Shlomo Avineri, an international spokesman for the Second International, charged Begin in a Feb. 20 *Jerusalem Post* op-ed with "acting like he's still fighting the British madate" rather than leading a sovereign country and with sending so many of his ministers overseas that Israel has a veritable "government-in-exile." Avineri's castigations of the Begin government's expanded dealings with South Africa were the next day echoed by leaders of the Labour-led national trade-union confederation, the Histadrut, at a national convention.

According to the Israeli source, these eruptions threaten Israel with "chaos and confusion"—unless "the possibility emerges that Weizman can pull together a coherent group around himself."

Energy Minister Modai, a potential Weizman ally, told a Chicago audience during a three-day U.S. trip this

week that Sadat "would not back down" from his demands for an overall peace and urged that Israel develop its diplomacy appropriately. Modai advocated joint nuclear-energy development projects with the Egyptians and other Arabs based on U.S. nuclear exports, following the lead taken by President Nixon in the 1960s.

Another potential Weizman ally, Eban associate Yossi Sarid, this week demanded in Israel's Parliament that Dayan resign because of his "security leaks" on Israeli arms shipments to Ethiopia. Sarid's demand was voted down by the ruling coalition's majority.

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