

# Dayan Coup D'Etat In Israel Raises Threat Of Lebanon War

A coup d'état by Israeli military circles linked to former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, on behalf of the Trilateral Commission and the Rockefeller family interests, ousted moderate Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin this week and plunged the Middle East into renewed crisis. The resignation of Rabin, ostensibly linked to a scandal involving illegal foreign bank accounts held by the Rabin family, is in fact the direct outcome of a raging factional battle in Israeli military circles between the moderate Rabin forces and the pro-"preemptive strike" faction led by Dayan, Defense Minister Shimon Peres, General Ariel Sharon and their allies.

The escalating fighting in Lebanon between the Palestinian-leftist alliance, backed by the Arab states, against the paramilitary forces of ultra-rightist Camille Chamoun, is the immediate object of the Dayanist coup against Rabin. According to reports from Lebanese officials, 16 Israeli tanks and some personnel carriers have already moved into southern Lebanon in the wake of the Rabin resignation.

An Israeli move into Lebanon would instantly create an uncontrollable crisis, beginning with inevitable Israeli-Syrian clashes and probably leading to a renewed Arab-Israeli war.

The stunning capitulation by Rabin to what must have been nothing less than an ultimatum from the Peres-Dayan faction opens the field to Peres to become the Labour Party's Prime Ministerial candidate. The Defense Minister was narrowly defeated by Rabin in a party congress in February. Rabin's resignation cannot take effect, under Israeli law, until after the May 17 elections, since a caretaker Prime Minister cannot resign office. But Rabin has taken himself out of the race, and is expected to seek a "leave of absence" that would turn day-to-day functions over to Deputy Prime

Minister Yigal Allon until the elections are over.

In 1967, when Rabin was Israeli Chief of Staff, a similar power play by Dayan forced then-Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to install Dayan as Defense Minister — which greatly helped precipitate the Arab-Israeli War of June 1967 three days later. At that time, under pressure from the Dayan forces in the army, Rabin reportedly suffered a nervous breakdown.

In recent weeks, there has been a spate of articles in the Israeli press, coordinated by Defense Ministry leaks, stating that Israel must adopt an active policy of advocating a pre-emptive strike against the Arabs. The scare campaign in the press was led by military correspondent Zeev Schiff of *Haaretz* — the paper which led the watergating campaign against Rabin. *Haaretz*, a "liberal" daily, is known to be a mouthpiece for the Dayan forces (see coverage in *Le Soir* of Brussels and the French weekly *Nouvel Observateur* below).

According to several sources, Rabin officially ordered a halt to talk about a pre-emptive strike in the Israeli press, which may have precipitated the Dayan power play.

The Dayan coup follows a chilly visit to Washington by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. During the Sadat-Carter meetings, it became clear that the Egyptian leader "either cannot or will not implement U.S. policy in the Middle East," according to sources close to the Carter Administration. Sadat's unreliability apparently contributed to the Carter decision to pull an Israeli coup and force a showdown with the Arabs.

A Middle East war, with the accompanying threat of an oil embargo, may be the sole means for Carter to push through his soon-to-be announced "conservationist" energy program.

## 'I Guarantee You A War If Carter Handles The Middle East His Way'

*The following is an interview with Joseph Churba, the former chief of U.S. Air Force Middle East intelligence, who was removed from his position after breaking protocol and publishing an article critical of the Pentagon for its lack of support for Israel.*

Q: How do you assess the debate in Israel over the necessity of a pre-emptive strike against the Arabs?

A: Most of what is being said about a pre-emptive strike relates to the Lebanese situation. Gen. Ariel Sharon, for

one, sees a war this summer...Lebanon — that is a serious, potentially explosive, situation. If it is true that Syria is supporting the PLO and has become aligned with the aim of destroying the Christian buffer zone, we're in a new ball game. Will Israel regard this as a threat to its security? How seriously will the Israelis react? This is the big question.

Q: Might not there be some prior deal with Rabin to allow the Chamounist extremists to be pacified?

A: I think the Israelis would take a very, very conservative interpretation of Syria's actions. If Syria is helping the PLO and there is a Syrian PLO drive to make southern Lebanon a base for terror raids and to destroy the Israeli-created buffer zone, the Israelis will *drastically* revise their policy toward Damascus. The big question, then, is what is the reality on the ground.

The on-going southern Lebanon situation contradicts the diplomacy. Sadat seems to be a moderate; he wants peace. But southern Lebanon contradicts these words, and that is how the Israelis would read it.

The Israelis are not going to cooperate. Their allies are the Christians led by Chamoun. The Israeli interest is to maintain the buffer zone. No PLO units can actively work there if there is a Christian buffer zone. Assad is now realizing with the PLO his aim to destroy the south, and there can be no accommodation with Israel. The Israelis will have to decide whether to tolerate all this, and I don't think they will.

What is developing is an action-reaction cycle that can easily cause everybody to miscalculate and can quickly escalate into a crisis, and then a war, and negate the peace talks, and the diplomatic initiatives. Maybe, in fact, it's all part of the latter; it's pressure. Syria and Egypt may be coordinating on this. It's more than symbolic that Arafat is in Moscow while Sadat is in Washington. This is a clever stratagem. Sharon may be right. The Arabs are going for peace and for war simultaneously. Southern Lebanon is the flashpoint. They want to challenge the assumption that Israel controls the south...

Q: How will this shape up in terms of a possible U.S.-Soviet confrontation?

A: The Arab strategy suits Moscow's purposes. The military option is not dead. Egypt wants weaponry; the Syrians have weaponry — Egypt receives Soviet equipment through Eastern Europe. This is a very clever stratagem, closely coordinated, probably designed to force the U.S. to pressure Israel. It's the Rogers Plan. The diplomatic heat is on, while the southern Lebanon reality changes piecemeal. The Israelis are to get the message: You have to leave the territories.

Brzezinski doesn't understand what the Arabs are up to. The U.S. simply has to make up its mind whether a

physically and strategically insecure Israel is in the interest of the U.S. It's not a question of survival, but of vitality. I'm not sure the U.S. has made this determination. My outlook is that forcing Israel to give in to Arab terms would increase Israel's and the U.S.'s strategic vulnerability. I say that it's insanity from an American perspective to shore up totalitarian Egypt at the expense of democratic Israel.

Q: What effect is this U.S. policy having on Israel?

A: If Israel perceives the balance of power going against it, as in 1955, Israel will go to war. In Israel the sympathy is probably for the hawkish stand. The dominant party is hawkish. The power in control (Rabin) is more dovish; it's pushed into a helpless reliance on the U.S. What will be at issue in the elections is the position of dependence on the U.S. Rabin's opponents are far more assertive and want to go it alone. After the May 17 election, I see a stronger position emerging in Israel toward the U.S. and the Arabs. The public won't withdraw from the territories and accept a PLO state, regardless of who's in power; even if the U.S. cuts off economic ties. This is a fundamental question of security. Policy-makers here have exaggerated the Israelis' dependency on our weaponry, and Israel has contributed to this. Israel's dependency is greatly exaggerated and this leads to great miscalculations. The go-it-alone feeling is growing, and this is the heart of the issue.

Everything I see from Carter is the opposite of what he said it would be. This is the Rogers formula, except worse.... If the Geneva conference is prepared on the same bases as the SALT talks, there will be the same result — collapse, and war. This new style of diplomacy is absolute insanity: extremely secretive one day, extremely open the next. Carter really muffed SALT up. I guarantee you a war if he handles the Middle East his way.

Q: The Europeans are extremely unhappy with Carter. Will they take initiatives to work toward a Middle East peace?

A: European initiative? Never. We killed that in 1956. If they see us as strong, they'll support us. If they see us as weak, they'll go to Moscow and the Arabs. They watch our lead, and our relations with Israel are a damned good barometer of how we're operating.

## Belgian, French Press Reports Fight Over Pre-Emptive Strike

*Reporter Victor Cygielman has recently written two articles, for the Belgian newspaper Le Soir on March 27-28 and the French magazine Nouvel Observateur April 4-10 outlining the battle of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin against domestic warhawks trying to create a climate favorable to the launching of a preventive strike against the neighboring Arab states. In Le Soir, Cygielman reported that a leading Israeli newspaper carried the headline, "The Arab Armies On the Brink of*

*Attacking Israel By Surprise?" His report continued:*

Having read this alarmist title in a Hebrew daily, one could ignore it, minimize it, or attribute it to the account of an irresponsible journalist lacking sensational copy. But when one finds the same motif in the principal Israeli dailies, under the byline of their military specialists, one cannot permit oneself to treat lightly a "warning" visibly inspired from on high.

Two other Israeli papers headline, on the same day, "The Spring of 1977 Recalls the End of the Summer of 1973," and "The Arabs Are Preparing Themselves For war." Forty-eight hours earlier, General Ariel Sharon warned the Israelis that the Arabs could easily launch a surprise attack this summer or in the autumn of 1977. The maintenance of Mordechai Gur in his post of Chief of Staff for another year, decided last week, could equally be due to the apprehensions in high places that a new war could break out in the months to come.

On what is the Israeli analysis based? Why have they judged it necessary to sound the alarm now, at the risk of creating tension and of frightening Israeli public opinion?

It is interesting that the same arguments are used by each of the specialists. The purchase of massive amounts of arms by the Arab countries. The intensive training and the modernization of the Arab armies. The affirmation that one must no longer take seriously the "complaints" of Sadat as to the absence of spare parts from the Soviets. The establishment of a unified Arab command and strategy, equally on the traditional fronts as on the extended front such as that of the Red Sea, which Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the two Yemens, and Somalia want to transform into an "Arab lake."

But why the trumpet of alert at this precise moment?

Firstly because the Israeli military circles fear that the Israeli population takes too seriously the offensive for peace of Sadat and the other Arab leaders, and trust too much in the American (and Russian) will to make this year a year of intense diplomatic activities — to the point of no longer envisaging, of no longer being ready morally for, the outbreak of a new war in the near future...

...Israeli military circles seem to want to prepare Israeli opinion, starting now, for the possibility of preventive war. "Israel has the moral duty to take the initiative to attack first, from the moment that it becomes clear that the Arabs are preparing to do it. It is necessary that the Arabs know that those who threaten and proclaim openly that they will go to war, court the risk to see themselves pre-empted..." writes the military specialist of Haaretz, Zeev Schiff, generally considered to be the best-informed and most serious military commentator in Israel.

When one knows the depth of the "trauma" of Israel due to the surprise attack of the Arabs in October 1973 and when one knows that two Israeli strategists of the first order — General Motta Gur and Ahron Yariv — have both recently evoked the possibility of an Israeli preventive war, one must lend an attentive ear to the psychological campaign launched in the past few days in Israel.

*After outlining the same series of events in his Nouvel Observateur piece, Cygielman continued:*

...The Arabs can decide from one day to the next to open hostilities at Sharm el-Sheikh, or on the Golan, or on all the fronts all at once, on the eve of the Geneva conference or during the conference, even if the new unified command is not quite consolidated, even if all the arms purchased have not yet been delivered.

But there is another reason that explains the cries of alarm. A faction of the Israeli leadership is convinced that the negotiations, at Geneva or elsewhere, are condemned to failure, and that it will be necessary to go to war sooner or later. It is therefore necessary to prepare international and Israeli opinion for the idea that an Arab attack is inevitable, and therefore that a preventive war launched by the Israelis is justified in advance.

There is resultantly no longer any hesitation in raising tension. The military expert of the daily Maariv estimates that tension is preferable to indifference, and the Israeli Minister of Defense, Shimon Peres, heats up the atmosphere by declaring that the Arab armies, once the decision is taken, can "pass to the attack in the following six hours"...

But there remains Israeli leaders who have a view that is more calm about things. Rabin is one of these. He distrusts the "scenarios" of experts: in 1973 these experts had insisted with joyous assurance that the Arabs would not be capable of making war for ten years. There is no reason to believe the "specialists" who — they are often the same — claim that the enemy is going to attack in ten days....

... We have learned ourselves, from a highly authoritative source, that "the deployment of the Egyptian and Syrian armed forces has practically not varied for three and a half years" and that there is nothing in the deployment corresponding to the eve of the October 1973 offensive.

### Israeli Coup And The CIA Revelations About King Hussein Are The Same Operation

*The following evaluation on the Rabin resignation was described to NSIPS by a leading U.S. Arabist recently returned from a Middle East and European tour:*

I'm not very hopeful at all about this situation. But the Rabin thing is not surprising. When I was in Amman, I would have guessed it. There's a close connection between the Rabin thing and the recent revelations about King Hussein and the CIA.... I know this is true, I've seen all the evidence, it's a pretty bad situation.