

Over the past two days, an incredible alliance has taken shape involving Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, the paranoid Labour Party social democrats led by former Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Golda Meir, and the religious extremist Gush Emunim group — plotting together to prevent Begin's peace moves from continuing.

As Begin returned today to Israel, the opposition Labour Party opened a drive for a vote of no-confidence in Israel's Knesset (Parliament), ostensibly because Begin's statements on the West Bank made in Washington last weekend "open the way for the creation of an independent Palestinian state" and challenge the right of both Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan to have sovereignty over the region.

Preceding the no-confidence drive, Meir told a Labour Party leadership meeting Dec. 19 that the Party should "stop Begin from making his political moves and should not give him backing because this policy would harm the country." One day later, the social democratic paranoids opened up coordinating sessions with the Gushies to oppose any "sell-out" on the West Bank.

It is no longer a secret in Israel that Dayan is orchestrating these moves. The Anglo-American traitor is known to be irate that Begin has systematically cut him out of regional diplomatic action — the Jerusalem Post last week labeled Begin "Israel's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister" — and that Begin is determined to push for a comprehensive settlement with all the Arab states rather than attempt to blackmail Egypt into a separate peace.

In the topsy-turvy political configuration that has occurred in the wake of Sadat's Nov. 19 trip to Jerusalem, Begin is now receiving support, even if critical, from the Labour Party dovish faction centered around former Foreign Minister Abba Eban. One Eban ally, Knesset member Yossi Sarid, factionalized against Meir and insisted instead that the Labourites should pressure Begin to make real concessions vis-à-vis the West Bank, rather than the "self-rule" non-starter.

A prominent Israeli dove and former violent opponent of "hawk" Begin told France's *Nouvel Observateur* magazine this week that "we should do nothing to embarrass Begin, while at the same time pushing him to make concessions....Begin is a man with historical vision who will hopefully understand what is needed on the Palestinian question to get the foundations of a real peace."

According to recent published opinion polls, Begin's support among Israel's population is very high. One U.S. source just returned from Jerusalem says the Prime Minister may "collapse the government, force new elections, and move to splinter into pieces the opposition parties if he feels too hemmed in by what Dayan and Co. are doing." This move, the source emphasized, "would give Begin a mandate for considering new concessions."

What Dayan Is Up To

This assessment comes from a U.S. Mideast expert just returned from Israel.

On The Israeli Internal Situation

(Israeli Foreign Minister) Dayan and (former Prime Minister) Rabin are in indirect contact, discussing ways to stop Begin's drive for an overall Arab-Israeli settlement. Dayan is holding discussions with the religious parties to find ways to bring Begin back in line, and, if not, what can be done. Dayan's problem, though, is that he has lost his constituency inside the country and needs more than the three men that he controls in the Rafi (a 1965 split-off from the Israeli Labour Party — ed.). As for Rabin, he's trying to get control of the Labour Party again and sees the Dayan alliance in very favorable terms.

The problems Dayan is facing are not going to be easy for him to solve. Begin is aware that Dayan is very upset with the way things are going, and, more specifically, that he has left Dayan at home during the recent regional diplomatic moves. Begin has clearly expressed his intention that he will not allow Dayan to handle serious matters with the Egyptians, and I am not going to be surprised if Begin does not take him to Cairo for the meetings with Sadat.

If by any chance Begin perceives that the whole affair is developing into a crisis, he will threaten to resign. This will give him the upper hand, since it will create splits inside the Labour Party and will cause fissures in the Democratic Movement for Change, and both groups will suffer losses to Begin.

On Begin And Sadat's Diplomatic Intentions In The Next Two Weeks

Begin needs time as much as Sadat does. Sadat and Begin have agreed on this. And in my opinion Sadat wants to allow Begin to work out his internal problems. But Sadat is willing to do this only if Begin agrees to come out with real concessions.

On the Palestinian question, Begin and Sadat — but more specifically Sadat — have a plan in mind. Begin won't negotiate with the PLO. But he will negotiate with some other Palestinian body, most likely the Palestinian National Council, which is, after all, a legislative group for the Palestinians. So, negotiating representatives for the Palestinians will be elected from the Palestine National Council and will include representatives from Egypt, from Syria, from Lebanon, and from the West Bank.

This will really get rolling only when the negotiations shift from Cairo to the United Nations. I am very optimistic that Begin and Sadat, after they meet in Cairo, will agree to a new UN-sponsored conference, which will take all these questions under consideration.

But this process I am describing will take three to four months to take place. In the meantime, Begin and Sadat will be engaged in many acrobatic and diplomatic actions to keep the momentum going.