

# Richard Murphy rigs Lebanon to explode

by Scott Thompson

Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs Richard Murphy has been caught once again rigging Lebanon for a new outbreak of bloody civil war. This time, Murphy traveled hat-in-hand to Damascus, where he put the U.S. seal of approval on Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's attempts to impose a pro-Syrian stooge as President of Lebanon, which would have strengthened the Syrian occupation of that country. However, when the vote for the new President was to have taken place in Parliament on Sept. 22, 41 Christian deputies refused to attend, and there was no quorum.

On the same day, outgoing Christian President Amin Gemayel formed a provisional military government. There is now the prospect of Lebanon being de facto partitioned between Gemayel's Christian government (that three Muslim appointees refused to be part of) and a pro-Syrian Arab government headed by Prime Minister Selim Hoss. Many informed analysts believe that there will also be a renewed outbreak of fighting between the Christian forces and various pro-Syrian paramilitary Muslim sects.

## Murphy goes too far

A senior former Middle East CIA agent told *EIR*, "Richard Murphy has made too many concessions. The man he picked to be President of Lebanon, Michel Daher, is one of Franjeh's boys." This source was referring to Suleyman Franjeh, the Syrian stooge whom Assad first tried to impose as the new "Christian" President of Lebanon on Aug. 19. The source elaborated that if Murphy were truly interested in finding a "compromise candidate," then there were several people, like Raymond Edde, who would have protected the interests of the Christian minority and Lebanese sovereignty during the Syrian occupation.

The reason why Assad sought to impose Franjeh and then Daher, according to this CIA source, is that he had caught the Christian Falange receiving weapons and money from Iraq, and Pakradouni of the Lebanese Falange had begun to form alliances against the Syrian occupation. Nonetheless, this source insisted, "Dick Murphy may have gone overboard on this. The Christians will never accept the candidate he is backing, and there will be a violent reaction."

Just how far Murphy's deal went was spelled out to *EIR* by a reliable Lebanese source, who said that while Murphy was in Damascus prior to the elections, he not only accepted

Daher as the candidate, but 1) offered to have the U.S. pay the \$850 million that Syria owes Iraq for oil and other supplies; and 2) guaranteed that the Saudis would continue to fund the 25,000 Syrian occupation troops in Lebanon for another two years. In exchange for these concessions, Assad reportedly stated that Syria would see that American hostages are released.

Up until the last minute of the Sept. 22 parliamentary election for President, State Department spokesman Charles Redman revealed, the Reagan administration had pressured the Lebanese Christians to elect Daher, who was publicly billed as "a President who can institute reforms." The specific reform State had in mind was a Syrian-dictated rewriting of the Lebanese Constitution, which would have been devastating to the Christian minority.

As one former assistant secretary of state for Middle East affairs told *EIR*, this entire incident confirms that "the Reagan administration is merely continuing the policy begun by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger of involving Syria in Lebanese internal affairs. This policy lacks coherence. Not only is Syria closer to the Soviet Union than to the United States, but Syria has never even recognized the existence of Lebanon on its border. It has deep, historic claims to Lebanese territory." While Kissinger claimed that he had offered Syria a leading role in Lebanon to woo it away from the Soviets, the truth is that this step was part of a "New Yalta" deal with the Soviets that was intended to partition Lebanon between a Greater Syria (backed by the Soviets) and Greater Israel (backed by the United States). Kissinger's policy was to carve up a sovereign nation that had been a real friend of the United States in the region.

## Renewed civil war?

There is no question that the State Department was crying "crocodile tears" when spokesman Charles Redman raised the specter of Lebanon emerging with two irreconcilable governments after it failed to elect a new President to Syria's liking. It would not have taken exceptional genius for Assistant Secretary Murphy to know that the Christians would never accept a pro-Syrian stooge as President and that there was a danger of a violent reaction. Beginning with a major car bombing Sept. 21, Lebanon is now poised for a renewed outbreak of civil war.

Recognizing the bind that Murphy had placed his country in, outgoing President Amin Gemayel announced a provisional government. Its head is Christian Army Commander Michel Aoun, who was named prime minister and defense and information minister. In addition to Gen. Aoun, President Gemayel appointed three cabinet officers who were the commanders of the army's brigades representing the Sunni Muslims, Shi'ites, and Druze. Unfortunately, the Muslim cabinet officers refused to serve in Gemayel's provisional military government, which would have strengthened the Lebanese Army's position among warring militias.