



Soviets, Ford Act to Ease Middle East War Crisis

Kissinger Sets Israeli Move; Syria Near Collapse

June 12 (NSIPS) — The Soviet Union and the Ford Administration acted this week to prevent the crisis in Lebanon from setting off a general war in the Middle East. In a statement broadcast today by Radio Moscow, the Soviet government warned again that the “events in Lebanon may develop into a broader international conflict,” and cautioned both the U.S. and France not to intervene into Lebanon. “This is not 1958,” said Radio Moscow, a reference to the invasion of Lebanon by U.S. Marines in that year.

The Soviet statement, a reiteration of an earlier pronouncement issued June 9, also carried a pointed warning to Syria, whose armed forces — on order from Henry Kissinger — have been battling Lebanese leftists and the Palestine Liberation Organization. For the first time, the Soviets reported the de facto alliance of Syria and Lebanese Christian rightists against the left and the PLO, and hinted that Syria and Israel were acting in collusion: “Prime Minister Rabin of Israel has said he doesn’t want to intervene with Arabs who are suppressing Palestinians.”

The firm Soviet intention to block any outside military intervention in the Middle East intersected with efforts by President Ford and his allies in the U.S. Administration, including Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, to cool down the Lebanon crisis, whose flames are being fanned by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the National Security Council on behalf of Rockefeller forces. In a surprise move, Ford sent James T. Lynn, the director of the U.S. office on Management and Budget, on a tour of the Middle East. Lynn, who arrived yesterday in Damascus, Syria, is a known Ford supporter in the recent battle with Kissinger, who tried to boost U.S. military aid to Israel.

“Brink of World War III”

The urgency with which Ford and his advisers view the Middle East crisis was outlined in a column yesterday by Evans and Novak in the Washington Post. The Ford administration, reported Evans and Novak, considers the situation more dangerous “than officials publicly admit.” The columnists say that Ford believes that the impending overthrow of Syrian President Hafez Assad by leftists who object to Syria’s policy of murder in Lebanon might trigger “an Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon.” This, they report, might signal a repeat of the confrontation of October 1973, during the Arab-Israeli Oil Hoax war, when Kissinger ordered a worldwide nuclear alert of U.S. forces, and the U.S. and USSR “hovered on the brink of World War III.”

Key spokesmen for the Kissinger-NSC forces made crystal clear their dangerous intent to push forward at all costs for a showdown with the USSR. L. Dean Brown, the special U.S. envoy sent last month to Lebanon by Kissinger, chuckled when he was asked about the Soviet warning issued June 9. “Its all part of the game,” he told a caller. Brown also

ridiculed a proposal from the Arab League to send a pan-Arab force into Lebanon to replace the Syrians. “It’ll be a late day in the morning before you get an Arab League army together,” said Brown. “Why should Assad care?”

A top-level adviser to the State Department’s Policy Planning Committee was more blunt. “It would be useful for everybody if the PLO would be crushed in Lebanon. Syria just might do it yet. Somebody has to.” Asked about the Soviet statement, he laughed: “The Soviets are bluffing.” He derided the Soviet warning as an example of “presumptuous peasant bluntness.”

As Kissinger and co. push Assad toward his downfall, the Israeli war machine is being geared up to intervene against Lebanon and Syria. According to the right-wing Israeli newspaper Maariv, on the night of June 10 a major reassessment of Israeli policy toward Lebanon was carried out, resulting in a sharpened definition of the tripwire “red line” for an Israeli move into Lebanon. Israeli officials, backed by Kissinger, warned that the arrival of an Arab League force in Lebanon to replace the Syrian troops could justify an Israeli invasion. The New York Times strongly backed this suicidal Israeli position in an editorial position, which said that a pan-Arab force in Lebanon “could drastically alter the Israeli defensive position,” leading to “the eruption of a new Middle Eastern war.”

In a telegram to Prime Minister Rabin, U.S. Labor Party Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche warned Israel in the strongest terms that “whatever is going on in Lebanon is none of the Israel government’s goddam business,” adding that Israel should stop “spreading horseshit around presumed ‘red lines’ in Lebanon.” LaRouche has asked Arab governments to impose a full oil embargo against the advanced capitalist sector if Israel acts in Lebanon or Syria, the telegram stated.

The Syrian Trigger

The fatal weakness of the Assad regime in Syria now represents the prime danger for touching off a regional war. At least 15,000 Syrian troops, backed by 500 tanks and heavy artillery, have occupied large stretches of eastern Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley and northern Lebanon, and have pushed several times, unsuccessfully, toward Lebanon’s major cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon. Overt Soviet opposition to the Syrian moves in Lebanon, Iraqi military pressure on Syria’s eastern frontier, and universal condemnation of the Assad regime from other Arab states has isolated Assad and given a boost to left-wing and pro-Iraqi dissidents in Damascus. Informed observers consider the overthrow of Assad a matter of days.

Syria’s failure to crush the left-Palestinian coalition in Lebanon during the initial phase of the invasion, which began on June 1, has placed the regime in grave danger. The

strength of the leftist forces in Lebanon reportedly shocked a majority of Syria's officers, and Syria suffered heavy losses, including dozens of tanks to shoulder-fired anti-tank missiles carried by the Lebanese-Palestinian forces. In Sidon, the city's defenders allowed a Syrian column to enter the heart of the city, then ambushed it in a hail of fire, virtually annihilating the Syrian force. Heavy losses by Syria were also reported in the mountain passes in central Lebanon along the road to Beirut, and in Beirut itself. According to *Le Monde*, a 2000-man Syrian force stationed near Beirut International Airport was wiped out by a concerted attack organized by the new Central Military Command, uniting the Lebanese left and the PLO.

Many Syrian troops were told by Damascus that they were being sent to Lebanon to restore peace, were stunned when they found themselves battling Palestinians and the Lebanese left, according to the *Washington Post*. Thousands of men, including top officers from the Syrian force and from the Syrian-controlled Palestine Liberation Army and Saiqa have defected to the left. Both the commander of the PLA forces in Lebanon and the No. 2 man in the pro-Syrian Lebanese Baath faction went over to the leftist side, and have issued radio appeals for mass defections.

According to the *Washington Post*, the use of force required now to crush the resistance and occupy Beirut and other Lebanese cities, probably necessitating the use of the full power of Syria's Air Force with accompanying heavy civilian casualties, may carry a political price that the Syrian regime cannot afford to pay.

Arab League, Libya Seek Truce

Intensive diplomacy within the Arab sector, led by the Arab League, has tried to offer Syria a face-saving compromise for pulling its troops out of Lebanon. An abrupt withdrawal, an admission of defeat by Syria, is not feasible without ensuring the collapse of the Assad junta, the possible spark for a war between Israel and Iraq.

A meeting of Arab foreign ministers convened, in permanent session, on June 8 at Arab League headquarters in

Cairo to seek a formula for achieving a truce in Lebanon and a face-saving Syrian military withdrawal. On June 10, Syria reportedly agreed to a proposal calling for the complete withdrawal of Syrian forces and their "replacement" by a force of Arab peacekeeping troops from Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the PLO. However, the plan apparently floundered when Syria repudiated its terms the following day, suggesting pressure from Kissinger, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

After the collapse of the League's first effort, Syria reportedly stepped up its intervention, sending several new tank brigades and heavy artillery across the border on June 11. Heavy fighting broke out in Lebanon between Syria and the Left PLO command, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat charged that the long-feared "general offensive" by Syria has begun.

The Palestinians also reported that Jordanian army troops had been deployed yesterday into Lebanon following a hurried meeting between Assad and the Jordanian prime minister and the chief of staff in Damascus.

The visit of the Jordanians to Syria was reportedly a response to the movement of several Iraqi divisions to the Iraqi-Syria border. The Iraqi move, an action to tie down Syrian forces on another front and pressure Damascus, was denounced by the Syrian Information Minister, who "expressed concern at the movement of Iraqi troops." Syrian forces were rushed to the Iraqi frontier to counter the buildup, further undercutting the chaotic Syrian regime.

Arab League Secretary General Mahmoud Riad arrived yesterday in Damascus to make a last-ditch effort to persuade Syria to accept the League's peace force. The Riad visit, and parallel negotiations in Beirut led by Libyan Prime Minister Abdessalam Jalloud, resulted in yet another paper agreement, according to which the Syrians will withdraw their army within ten days.

But reports from Lebanon indicate that the Syrians have no intention of withdrawing their forces, and that the Assad acceptance of the League plan may be just a maneuver to "buy time."

Syria Regime on Brink of a Coup as Invasion of Lebanon Backfires on Assad

June 8 (NSIPS) — As the shock troops of the Syrian armed forces methodically advance on Beirut to battle the Lebanese left and their Palestinian allies, the regime at home is in a shambles. The dictatorship of Hafez Assad, opposed by widening layers of the Syrian population and by left and progressive forces throughout the Arab sector, is on the brink of being felled by a coup. The Assad regime's willingness, month after month for nearly a year, to act as an obedient tool of Henry Kissinger in his drive for a rigged Arab-Israeli showdown on Israel's northern front, has created chaos in Syria.

By now, a leading U.S. Congressional source reported last week, only the 25,000 palace guard thugs headed by Hafez Assad's brother Rifaat are holding the line against a coup. The "government" of Syria is the core of the group of NATO-connected gangsters who first steered Syria into the arms of

the U.S. National Security Council through systematic purges in the late 1960s and early 1970s — the heads of the armed services and the Interior Ministry and those in their immediate employ. Even Foreign Minister Khaddam and Prime Minister Ayyubi are under the gun, soon to be replaced. The country itself is split down the middle between groups sympathetic to Iraq and the Soviet Union and those connected to Rockefeller's Aramco oil sheikhs. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, if either side tries to prevail over the coming days, "the regime won't last a week."

The Props Collapse

Before this year's events Syria was a "radical Arab state," a poor imitation of the pro-socialist Iraqi Baath regime to Syria's east. Nominally ruling at the top was a "National Front" that juridically shared power with Syria's pro-Moscow Communist Party. Organizational contacts into the