

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 Ayybbi 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

population were maintained through the renegade "Syrian Baath Party," an Assad-controlled splitoff from Iraq's Baath. Syria's volatile Palestinian refugee population was controlled through the institutional set-up of the Syrian army-backed Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) and through the Syrian wing of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Saiqa. Prevailing at the top of the pyramid was the Assad clique, basing itself on top-down control of one of Syria's minority sects, the Alawites, of which Assad himself is a member, in alliance with right-wing honchos from the majority Sunni Muslim sect, united around British-created "Arab nationalism" and obsessive opposition to the "Zionist state."

The first victim of Assad's collaboration with Kissinger in carrying out the second phase of Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy after the September 1975 "Sinai Pact" between Egypt and Israel were the Communists. By the end of 1975, as Assad moved for the first time to openly collude with the fascist Lebanese Falangists, Communist leader Khaled Bakdash was placed under preventive detention, and the first wave of what became periodic arrests of leftists began. By April 1976 as the collusion between Assad, the Israelis, and Kissinger around a stepped-up Syrian intervention into Lebanon on the side of the fascists emerged, the Communists moved out of the erstwhile "National Front," collapsing it. Communists and leftists have since been subjected to continuous repression by Assad's secret police.

By mid-April, all institutional props began to disintegrate. The "Syrian Baath Party," described by one knowledgeable Washington source as a series of "little offices in little villages with pool tables in them" but with at least some minimal significance as an informational apparatus, collapsed. According to *Le Monde* reporter Eric Rouleau, 80 percent of the electorate stayed away from the polls in the most recent regional administrative elections, while only 15 percent voted for the "Baath."

As this month's Syrian invasion of Lebanon unrolled and in the weeks immediately preceding, PLA units suffered a steady stream of defections. The Saiqa group, always an arm of Syrian intelligence but formerly boasting nominal ties to the PLO, has also been hit with heavy defections, and has been systematically repopulated through the deployment of thugs paid by "praetorian guard" head Rifaat Assad.

Dissension has spread to the armed services. According to *Afrique-Asie* magazine, the commandos of a 10,000-member elite corps in the army have issued an organizational denunciation of the Lebanon intervention. Four generals were reportedly arrested last week by Assad's police for refusing to order troops into Lebanon and for plotting against Assad. Rouleau reports that loud debates have broken out throughout army units being mobilized for Lebanon duty, while one Arab diplomatic source wryly commented, "If Assad allows his troops time to think as they move into Lebanon, he'll be in trouble."

Assad's Vietnam

Assad's debacle in Lebanon is ironically the culmination of six decades of counterinsurgent manipulation of the Arab sector population, first by British Intelligence and more recently by the Rockefeller-run CIA and National Security Council. Assad's backing boils down to a set of peasant-paranoid fantasies, manipulated by intelligence services, which have compelled him to enter a path leading rapidly to his own demise.

Syrian nationalists have never relinquished the dream of the reconstruction of the "Greater Syria," split up by the French into the countries of Lebanon and Syria in the 1940s. To this day Syrians, as personified by Assad (who also seeks "stability" and "honor" for his fellow Alawites) yearn for a Middle East map from which the "Lebanese" and "Zionist" "entities" have magically disappeared. As an aspect of this fixation, the Syrian population is bewitched by the "return of the Golan Heights" from Israel, lost under humiliating circumstances in the June, 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Henry Kissinger, during his brinkmanship "shuttle diplomacy" over the past nine months, has cynically convinced Assad that the National Security Council will rein in the Israelis, that at the end of the arduous path of the Lebanon invasion lies the prize of the Golan Heights, if Assad unleashes his police and armed forces to exterminate the widespread opposition to Kissinger's diplomacy along Israel's northern tier.

At each juncture at which Assad, seeing his internal position evaporate, has had the choice of pulling out through some face-saving device; he has instead only more wildly thrown his forces into the battle, like a gambler who compulsively keeps going after yet another disastrous loss. At each juncture, it has been Kissinger's cajolery and promises that have kept the gullible Assad strung along.

As this week's events decisively demonstrate, Assad has been played for a sucker, and his regime is suffering the consequences.

Exclusive Interview:

State Department Advisor: 'Syria Will Destroy the Left'

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 10 (NSIPS) — *The following interview was conducted today by NSIPS with a top U.S. State Department advisor on the nuclear war threat posed by the Syrian invasion of Lebanon.*

NSIPS: Mr. L—, it seems we just squeaked by last night, and that an element of rationality has finally entered into Syrian President Assad's decision-making.

Dr. L—: Rationality? Ha! It would be useful for everybody if the PLO would be crushed in Lebanon. The Syrians just might do it yet. Somebody will have to. Only the Syrians can do the job properly.

NSIPS: Are you serious, Dr. L—? The Soviets will never allow that, as their public statement makes absolutely clear. The U.S. should thank the Iraqis ...

Dr. L—: The Iraqis are just playing the Russian game, and the Russians, with presumptuous peasant bluntness, said (in the Soviet government statement) that the Middle East was much closer to them than to us and other such nonsense. The Russians are bluffing. The U.S. it seems, has a fear of involvement (in the Mideast) and the Iraqis. The Russians have no interest in the Middle East, except for Iraq and the Palestine Liberation Organization school girls. Ha!