

Soviets, the Europeans, and the Arabs; if he is able to successfully overcome the subversive influence of Rockefeller agent Dayan. The release last week of an energy policy by the Likud-linked Zionist Organization of America shows that that option is by no means ruled out. The statement called for expanded nuclear energy development, acknowledging Soviet superiority in energy research over the U.S.' dismal nuclear energy program.

Third, the Begin regime puts U.S. relations with Israel in an awkward position. Some Mideast observers are forecasting that Washington will act to get rid of Begin since support for a Likud government in Israel will drive the Persian Gulf and Arab nations straight to the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, top Likud leaders, including Ezer Weizman, Dayan's brother-in-law, have projected the possibility of a U.S.-Israel military alliance against the Soviets and Arabs. *Pravda*, the Soviet daily, warned June 12: "The Likud bloc hopes for the support of those circles in the U.S. who are interested in preserving a continuing hotspot of tension in the Middle East." The National Security Council-deployed Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the American Jewish Lobby, has been publicly pressing the Carter Administration to accept Israel's hardline position.

Begin Asserts Independence

The Carter Administration worries over the Begin reg-

ime could not have been assuaged by Begin's announcement this week that Brzezinski associate Yigal Yadin, archaeologist and head of the Democratic Movement for Change, will not be part of the Begin cabinet. Yadin, not as dependent on his following and his party members, as Begin, is considered freer to carry out explicit Rockefeller policies.

In another unexpected move, Begin made clear that General Ariel Sharon, a warhawk associate of Dayan, will not hold the super-cabinet post of Coordinator for Internal Security, but will instead become Agriculture Minister.

In addition, Begin's closest political ally Shmuel Katz arrived in the U.S. this week on a mission, he said, to clarify Likud policy from the reports of that policy in the *New York Times*. According to Katz, Begin intends to adopt economic and other policies that will make Israel less dependent on the U.S. Katz unequivocally termed the step-by-step diplomacy as leading to the destruction of Israel. This contradicts the recent claim in *Ha'aretz* that "only a renewal of the step-by-step diplomacy of Kissinger can avoid a new war in the region." Katz strongly attacked Carter for interfering, and blocking, the Likud's effort for Arab-Israeli negotiations with his provocative talk of homelands and refugee compensation.

Lebanon Crisis Builds

The unresolved political situation in Lebanon seriously worsened this week, as Israeli units and Israeli-backed Lebanese extremists launched new attacks in the south of Lebanon. *Al Baath*, official daily of Syria's ruling Baath Party, warned June 13 that the Israelis are readying a preemptive strike against the Arab states through southern Lebanon. According to the next day's *Christian Science Monitor*, Syrian Foreign Ministry officials are expecting an "all-out push by Israel into the Arkoub regions." Special Israeli engineering units have begun to build roads and communication networks towards the strategically vital Arkoub region in southeastern Lebanon, at the same time that Israeli forces and their rightist allies shelled numbers of villages in the south, including forays toward the central town of Nabatiyeh.

Israeli leaders have expanded contacts with rightist Lebanese leaders, in one case conducting a secret meeting on the island of Cyprus. Israel's likely next Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman, recently met with Bechir Gemayel, son of Falange Party leader Pierre Gemayel.

Lebanese fascist militiamen have also reportedly received special training in Israel, a deployment coinciding with the activation of fascist networks in Europe for fighting in Lebanon. The Greek Communist Party newspaper *Rizospastis* reports that several hundred West German mercenaries have recently surfaced in the southern Lebanese fighting.

In a June 15 dispatch from Beirut, Cuba's *Prensa Latina* news agency reported a "steady intensification"

of the fighting in Lebanon over the prior 48 hours and assessed that a major crisis was virtually inevitable during the next few days. *Prensa Latina* cited a report appearing in Kuwait's *Al Qabas* newspaper that the U.S. ambassadors to Syria and Egypt are aware that Israel is planning aggression into southern Lebanon.

To deal with the crisis, Palestine Liberation Organization External Affairs Minister Farouk Kaddoumi rushed to Egypt from Italy June 14 for meetings with the Egyptian leadership. Before leaving Rome, Kaddoumi stressed to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* "If the Israelis want to elect a fanatic to head their government, that's their business... Israeli extremism won't lead to Palestinian extremism."

Syrian Dilemma

Israel's actions have caused grave dilemmas for Syrian President Hafez Assad. If he sends his army into southern Lebanon, Israel will regard this as a violation of the "red line" limitation placed by Israel upon Syrian troop movements and will undoubtedly strike directly at Syrian territory. (Syrian failure to act will allow Israel to continue its operations.) Syria has wanted to stabilize Lebanon by establishing set Palestinian strongholds in the South.

Assad is under intense pressure to do *something*. The Syrian economy has been badly depleted by the costs of maintaining an occupying army in Lebanon and various army factions are fearful lest the 30,000 soldiers in Lebanon detract from Syria's ability to defend its vulnerable

Golan Heights flank. This latter fear has been exacerbated by intemperate warnings from Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur and from the newspaper *Haaretz*, mouthpiece of ex-Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, against any Syrian move to reinforce its Golan Heights regiments.

According to the British press and observers in Beirut and Damascus, a serious factional split is developing in Syria over how to deal with the Lebanese crisis.

The group of superhawks led by Assad's brother, Rifaat, controller of the elite 25,000-man "Praetorian Guard," are demanding an immediate show of force against the PLO in Lebanon in order to "pacify" the situation. This group's strength was demonstrated by the June 13 hanging in Damascus of two men accused of being "Iraqi agents" and by the June 10 murder in Lebanon of Fayez Mansour, a top commander of the pro-Iraq Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by pro-Syrian units.

In opposition to Rifaat, is a group financially backed by the Saudi Arabians, who late last month substantially cut back funding for Assad's government in protest against Syrian military crackdowns against the PLO in Lebanon. The most pre-eminent spokesman for this grouping appears to be Prime Minister Abdurrahman Khleifawi. Khleifawi, who just spent a week in Belgrade, where he attacked the New York banks, is rumored to be resigning in protest over Assad's Lebanon policies.

In a delicate balancing act, Assad has been encouraging the forging of Lebanese national institutions based on the old "Chehabist-Deuxieme Bureau" secret police network that ran Lebanon in the 1960s. His Foreign Minister Abdul-Halib Khaddam recently worked out an ar-

range where by Palestinians would be sent to Lebanon's south for temporary settlement, an arrangement which Assad hopes to exploit to build up defenses against any planned Israeli attack against Syria through Lebanon. The danger in this arrangement would be an Israeli attempt to use it as a pretext for further intervention into Lebanon.

Lebanese Instability

Assad's moves are being undercut by Lebanon's fascists, led by former President and Interior Minister Camille Chamoun. Four hundred Chamounists this week staged a stormtroop march through Beirut on the same day that 17 pro-Chamoun Lebanese Army officers suddenly resigned from the army.

Lebanese President Elias Sarkis' attempts to work out "urgent political reforms," and reconstitute the Lebanese army and police force as sound national institutions are being sabotaged by the pro-Chamoun right. Chamoun's son Dory is insisting on "political decentralization," i.e., partition, making a "recurrence" of Lebanon's civil war quite possible.

A May 30 *Baghdad Observer* feature revealed a recently declared "right-wing alert" of Chamounists and the Falange party in preparation for renewed military action to impose partition on the country. On May 18, the *Observer* reports, the Falange Politburo discussed a "new formula" for reorganizing Lebanon. However, says the *Observer*, to postpone renewed military action to an unspecified future date, while the Chamounists insist on "going ahead with the projects without any delay."