

more open to new means of seeking an Arab-Israeli peace, and is — under Begin — not willing to play games with the Carter Administration's attempt to revive Henry Kissinger's step-by-step policy. In addition, Israeli industrial interests who support the Likud are looking at the possibility of cooperating with the European Economic Community and even the Comecon to salvage Israel's debt-ridden economy.

The destabilization of Begin has already begun. A crisis with the Religious Party coalition partners of the Likud, which provide Begin with a narrow majority in Parliament, has erupted, and the fanatic Agudat Israel bloc is threatening to withdraw from the Government. This, in turn, is forcing Begin closer to the NSC-controlled fascist Democratic Movement for Change of Yigal Yadin.

Target: Egypt

On the Arab side, the chief target of the Brzezinski operation is Egypt. So far, despite series of unholy compromises, Sadat has not dared to drop Egypt's commitment to the PLO, which Egypt backed against Syria and Jordan during the two-year civil war in Lebanon. Three days ago, at a meeting in Cairo between Sadat and King

Hussein of Jordan, the king pleaded unsuccessfully with Sadat to support the Jordanian wish to reclaim the Israeli-occupied West Bank from the PLO, which intends to set up a Palestinian state there and in Gaza.

Sadat's refusal to support Hussein's anti-PLO scheme has virtually wrecked what hopes Secretary of State Cyrus Vance would have had to persuade the Sadat regime to acquiesce in the planned destruction of the PLO. The U.S. has stepped up arms shipments to Lebanon's extreme right in Lebanon, and — with the help of Syrian Intelligence — is heating up the Lebanon war again to crush the PLO.

As a result, a series of bombings and religious disturbances swept Egypt in the last week, which one source in Washington hinted was the work of Dayan and his military-intelligence thugs. Dayan and Rockefeller are counting on Sadat's desperation for peace to try to blackmail Egypt into a suicidal break with the PLO as a condition for peace — but Sadat isn't buying. A source at Brookings Institution in Washington said, "If Sadat wants to fight a war for the sake of the PLO, Israel is ready."

— by Bob Dreyfuss

Nationalists, Pro-Europeans Give Sadat Backing To Resist Carter

EGYPT

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat surprised some international observers this week by continuing his refusal to bow to Carter Administration demands that he end his country's support for the Palestine Liberation Organization, and accept instead the vague Carter formula of a vague Palestinian "entity," a formulation under which the Carter Administration hopes to bury PLO demands for a Palestinian state as an integral part of an overall Middle East settlement.

Pressure on Sadat from Carter and Presidential National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has not stopped at diplomatic armtwisting. Brzezinski-run destabilization operations, run through Interpol and Israeli intelligence, are in high gear inside Egypt, to box Sadat in on the Palestinian issue. A wave of terrorism by bands of Moslem "religious fanatics" has been described by Chase Manhattan sources as "the most brazen lawlessness since 1952" — when the despised King Farouk was overthrown.

The inside agent controlling these actions is no less a figure than Prime Minister Mamdouh Salem, who doubles as Interior Minister, a man who acquired nearly

two decades of experience in such black operations while serving as police chief of Alexandria.

With these operations underway, said a Brookings Institution thinktanker close to Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan this week, "Dayan will capitalize on Sadat's internal difficulties" to force Egypt to break with the PLO.

With all this going for them, some Carter Administration figures apparently thought that Sadat might use the occasion of his meetings with Jordan's King Hussein this week to redefine his nation's stance vis-à-vis the Palestinian question.

But this did not happen, and the reason is attributable to two factors: the continued, extremely strong Soviet influence within vital sectors of Egypt's military, and the existence of a strong "Europeanist Mediterranean" current running in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and related intellectual circles.

These factors, even more than the admittedly strong pro-Palestinian sentiment in the general population, give Sadat — a master of Byzantine balancing acts — the ability to avoid the dangerous path being charted by Brzezinski and Chase Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.).

Sadat is also working from a greater-than-usual position of strength because Chase Manhattan and the International Monetary Fund have been compelled to stabilize to some extent the country's devastating external debt situation to insure that Sadat is not hit by a

new round of nationwide riots similar to those of January, 1977; the consensus of competent observers is that he would not survive a new round of such unrest.

Soviet, European Influence

As described by informed Capitol Hill sources, the Egyptian Air Force and missile corps are still bastions of Soviet hegemony in Egypt. "If the Egyptians ever turned over that missile outfit to the U.S.," one source noted, "the Soviets would invade the country."

This source also revealed that the Egyptian Air Force is receiving significant supplies from the East Bloc, as evidenced by the very high rate of practice sorties being flown by Egyptian pilots. So extensive is Soviet influence in these areas, he concluded, that the cherished Brezinski hope of purchasing Egyptian military allegiance from the Soviets through U.S. arms sales to Egypt is "pointless." U.S. aid should be consolidated in "high-profile projects" geared to calming down the restless Egyptian middle class, he recommended.

At the same time, a leading Egyptian expert, Richard Mitchell of the University of Michigan, noted in an interview this week that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry is a hotbed of "pro-European" elements among the country's top bureaucratic and administrative levels. This group, Mitchell said, wishes to consolidate a powerful "European-Arab axis" over the coming months.

The Egyptian press itself corroborates this view. The English-language *Egyptian Gazette* throughout late June implored the European Economic Community to publicize its long-suppressed policy document on the Middle East. The paper used the occasion of a visit to Egypt by an Italian parliamentary delegation to stress the importance of independent EEC initiatives toward the Arab states. Once the EEC document was in fact published, on June 28, the press carried an official notice of welcome from Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy.

Reflecting the influence of Mediterranean oriented circles, Fahmy has recently been working to patch up relations with Libya, a vital step toward any form of workable Mediterranean security arrangement. Fahmy and Libyan counterparts recently met in the West African country of Togo and agreed to try to reverse the past year's deterioration in the two nations' relations.

One further element in the European and Egyptian picture will center around the expected visit to Egypt of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, whose country has been taking a prominent role in developing "triangular" EEC and East Bloc ties with Middle East countries.

The Tinderbox

Egypt remains, however, a hotbed for externally managed unrest. Immediately after the recent wave of

kidnappings and urban bombings attributed to a small band of zealots, Prime Minister Salem, Brzezinski's "inside" man on the scene, demagogically told a mass public rally that a nationally coordinated crackdown was already in operation to find the "terrorists." Salem's current role is to keep Sadat's regime off balance enough to prevent a Egyptian commitment to provide support for the PLO.

The most revealing public commentary on the terrorism was a recent *New York Times* dispatch likening the zealots, who have operated under a series of weird names, to West Germany's Baader Meinhof gang and to the Japanese Red Army. These two groups are widely known as NATO controlled agents provocateurs.

The Egyptian economy is also in a highly volatile state, despite the June 27 evaluation of an official Chase Manhattan publication headlined, "Egyptian Economic Prospects Bright," and the respite the government has gained from the Chase and IMF backoff on debt collection is only momentary.

According to the Soviet government paper *Izvestiya* this week, the Egyptian government has been forced to declare a national emergency because of the collapse of the cotton crop under conditions of an invasion of cotton fields by hordes of destructive cotton worms.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Egypt desk officer John Parker confirmed in a July 13 interview that "this is the worst cotton worm crisis Egypt has had in years." Parker reported that the American embassy in Cairo is writing worried reports to Washington about this cotton situation. He attributed the disaster to a number of causes, including government mismanagement and the inability of the government to import enough pesticides due to the crisis of the Egyptian economy.

Parker agreed that the cotton problem could trigger "rural unrest" and make life difficult for the government in Cairo.

The Egyptian economy is under intense scrutiny from the World Bank and Washington circles. World Bank Egypt head Khaled Ikram and World Bank chief loan officer Istenberg are both now in Egypt at the head of a delegation scheduled to spend three weeks in the country. The heads of the Mideast departments for the U.S. Agency for International Development, a Mr. Wheeler, and for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, John Brewer, are both now in Egypt.

In sum, the resolution of the Egyptian situation, with its key implications for the overall Mideast situation, may well hinge on how rapidly Egypt's nationalist and Europeanist forces are able to turn for outside backing to Western Europe and the Soviets, most likely in the context of the Mediterranean Security Pact plan now under broad discussion.

— Mark Burdman