

## Israel Breaks Lebanon Ceasefire

According to an October 14 press release from Tel Aviv, "Israel has broken off talks with the United States aimed at reaching a permanent settlement in south Lebanon as a result of violations in the ceasefire." The September 26 ceasefire which brought a respite to the heavy fighting of last month was reached through an agreement between Israel and their Christian-Falangist allies with their Palestinian leftist opponents in southern Lebanon.

### *U.S.-Israel Accord*

According to the terms of the U.S.-inspired ceasefire, a full Israeli military withdrawal from southern Lebanon would met with a corresponding Palestinian withdrawal to the north bank of the Litani river, thus paving the way for the positioning of troops from the regular Lebanese army in the contested area. The ceasefire would permit the successful conclusion of the third phase of the Chtaura Accords, an agreement reached between Syria, the PLO, and Lebanon last July whereby the reconstituted Lebanese army would take over the south in order to separate warring Christian Falangist and Palestinian forces.

In a Tel Aviv meeting September 25, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Chief of Staff Ezer Weizman gained assurance from U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis that Syria, Lebanon, and the PLO would act as partners in good faith. In addition, the U.S. was working closely with Lebanese President Elias Sarkis and Defense Minister Fouad Boutros to ready the Lebanese army for redeployment. According to press reports from that period, Begin and Weizman acted "in concert with international forces" and declared a withdrawal of Israeli troops from the area. Only Israeli Foreign minister Moshe Dayan then in the U.S. issued a statement contradictory to the decision of the Begin government. In a Washington press conference Dayan declared that he was opposed to any ceasefire afford.

Renewed fighting in Lebanon this week occurred simultaneously with Lebanese President Sarkis' decision to deploy 1,500 men from the newly reconstituted army into the south. Although vanguard units have taken over barracks in the cities of Nabatiyeh, Tyre, and Tibnin, this is only a cosmetic gesture. According to one Lebanese officer, "Israel is trying to sabotage the operation. Just when the Government was going to restore its authority, they began shelling again to obstruct the entry of the army." This *New York Times* report is corroborated by an October 12 article in the *London Financial Times* which reported that "Israeli forces still occupy six strategic sites in southern Lebanon."

### *Dayan-Falange Axis*

The situation at the Israeli-Lebanese border was relatively calm until Dayan's arrival in Israel on October 1. On that day the *Jerusalem Post* issued a statement from Saad Haddad, commander of the Christian militia forces in southern Lebanon. Haddad said: "The ceasefire was forced on us.... and as far as my men are

concerned Israel has virtually sold out because of broader foreign policy considerations." Claiming that the Palestinian leftists were amassing an army of 10,000 men, Haddad declared that his forces would never get out of southern Lebanon — a direct challenge to the authority of the Lebanese government.

But according to the October 12 *Financial Times* it is the Christians, also under control of Dayan, who are beefing up their forces. "The Christians claim that they are residents of the area, although the locals trained and armed by the Israelis are known to have been strengthened and outnumbered by reinforcements from the north." The Haddad-Dayan axis is manipulating a major flaw in the Chtaura Accords; the accords do not specifically make evacuation of the sensitive border area by Palestinian leftists conditional on a corresponding one by the Christian Falangist forces. Rejecting the reconstituted Lebanese Army as a viable peacekeeping force, Haddad has further declared that the Lebanese soldiers are "in reality the allies of the Palestinians" and would unite with the leftists as they did in the 1976 civil war.

Abou Iyad, number two man in the Fatah wing of the PLO and military overseer of the Chtaura Accords has declared that "the Palestinian Resistance would carry out their responsibilities to the letter." It is generally recognized that the Palestinians are eager to abide by the withdrawal guidelines in order to show their willingness to negotiate an overall Mideast peace settlement.

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## N. Yemen Assassination Linked To Saudi, British Policy Interests

North Yemen is tense in the wake of last week's assassination of President Lieut. Col. Ibrahim al-Hamdi and his brother Lieut. Col. Abdullah al-Hamdi. The well-timed murders came one day prior to the President's departure for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen-South Yemen, where he was to finalize ongoing efforts to reunify the two countries. This would have been the first meeting of the two Yemens since the 1962 civil war.

Presently the ruling Command Council is being led by its chief of staff, Lieut. Col. Ahmed Hussein al-Ghashmi, and two other army officers, all of whom served under Hamdi in the military command set up after seizing power in a coup in 1974.

Hamdi's death will have ramifications for the region as a whole, as well as within Yemen. Already the French paper *L'Aurore* was hinting Oct. 12 that the murder might touch off a destabilization in one of the most "vital regions in the world, controlling the Bab el-Mandeb straits and the oil routes."

Just one week before the assassination, think tank sources linked to British interests were making it clear that Hamdi's efforts at peace and reconciliation were not at all welcome, adding credibility to pro-Soviet South