

# Israel Bloodies Lebanon To Wreck Sadat's Geneva Gambit

A delicate diplomatic gambit by Egypt's President Anwar Sadat has raised hopes of a reconvened Geneva conference on the Middle East, pending the all-important meeting on Nov. 12 of 21 Arab foreign ministers in Tunisia. An Arab consensus at Tunis, according to most observers, could clear the way for an early Geneva conference.

But this week's bloody explosion in Lebanon, in which over 100 Lebanese—mostly civilians—died in the most intense Israeli bombardment in two years, threatened to disrupt the hopes for Geneva and even raised the possibility of Israeli-Syrian armed clashes leading to a fifth Arab-Israeli war.

The Lebanon crisis abruptly ended a truce in southern Lebanon that had begun on Sept. 26 with the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from Lebanon and the agreement of Israeli Premier Menachem Begin to a U.S. proposal  
truce cleared the way for the historic Oct. 1 joint U.S.-Soviet statement endorsing the "rights of the

Palestinians." Since that statement—generally thought to be part of a broader Middle East-SALT-human rights "package" between Washington and Moscow, mediated by France—was issued, the U.S. "Israel Lobby," Sen. Henry Jackson, and associates of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger have worked to undermine the package. This is the context in which the Israel raid on Lebanon should be seen.

## *Sadat's Gambit*

In a widely publicized speech before Egypt's National Assembly on Nov. 9, Sadat stated that he was willing to accept "any procedural conditions Israel wants" to get a Geneva conference underway. With Palestinian Liberation Organization chairman Arafat sitting nearby, Sadat said that the PLO "is the sole representative of the Palestinian people" and added: "When I go to Geneva, Israel will not be able to stop me from demanding the liberation of the occupied territories, the recovery of Palestinian rights, and their right to set up an in-

## Sadat Wavers On Geneva

*The following comes from an interview with Arab television by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on Nov. 4. These excerpts illustrate Sadat's political flip-flopping. On the one hand, he is endorsing a tactic certain to ensure an indefinite delay in reconvening Geneva peace talks (the formation of a "working group"), while at the same time he recognizes that any postponement of the conference threatens the security not only of the Middle East, but of Western Europe, the East bloc, and the U.S. as well.*

As long as the Geneva conference is a means to achieve a lasting peace, then careful preparations must be made for it. What I mean by careful is the old term I used during (Secretary of State) Vance's first and second visits — the formation of a working group to prepare a paper that will serve as the basis of the Geneva conference....Proper preparation, in my opinion, is the setting up of a working committee, which I proposed previously, to prepare a paper so that we meet in Geneva on the basis of this paper and not in a vacuum.

The issues of the world are in fact interrelated. No one can any longer live in isolation from the rest

of the world or to pull a curtain around himself. For instance, in Romania, while we were discussing the Middle East problem, we were discussing at the same time European security, the Helsinki conference and the conference which is now in session in Belgrade. We cannot separate Europe's security...from the Middle East problem. The Middle East problem, or rather the security of the Middle East, is an indispensable and vital part of European security. Hence, my discussion in Romania with my friend (Romanian President) Ceausescu covered all problems, including European security, on the basis that all these problems are in fact one problem.

As far as Iran is concerned, the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a local one which concerns the Arabs. The Shah of Iran is our brother and partner in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict is part of his problems because he lives with us in the Middle East. This was the reason for my visit to the Shah.

Peace is indivisible in the world. Not only Europe's security but also U.S. security and the Soviet Union's security depend on the security of the Middle East.

dependent state.”

Although he did not say so directly, it was widely thought that Sadat's insistence on ignoring procedural obstacles to Geneva in favor of issues of substance meant he was willing, with Arab approval, to go to Geneva without the presence of the PLO. Israel has emphatically stated that it would not attend Geneva with the PLO present, and therefore, Sadat is seeking an Arab consensus for a “unified Arab delegation” at Geneva, with Palestinians included, to meet Israel's objections to the PLO.

President Carter and Secretary of State Vance both endorsed the Sadat statement as a potential breakthrough in Middle East peace talks. Carter said that he hoped that Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon would back up Sadat, and Vance said bluntly—almost echoing Sadat—that it would be “a tragedy if the remaining differences over procedures were to thwart the opportunity” that now exists for peace. Carter urged Arabs and Israelis not to “quibble” over procedures.

The question that remains to be decided at the Nov. 12 Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting is whether or not Syria and the PLO will agree to work with Egypt on this approach. A great deal of bitterness exists between Sadat and Syrian President Assad over regional issues, since Sadat, under Henry Kissinger's guidance, agreed to the 1975 Sinai Pact that isolated Assad and set into motion the bloody Lebanese civil war.

Some suspicion obviously remains. Only last week, Sadat was crusading *against* the Geneva conference, hinting darkly that Egypt did not feel that it could be convened, which won him the praise of Israel's advocates of a return to the step-by-step approach (including the *Jerusalem Post*; see below). If Sadat is lying this time, then it is widely suspected that Egypt might use the breakdown of a Geneva conference, and the resulting crisis, to slip back into a Kissinger-style format.

But the chief factor militating against that possibility is the reported insistence of the Saudi Arabians on an overall settlement. As reported below, there is virtual unanimity that under no circumstances would Saudi Arabia, who pays Sadat's bills, accept a return to step-by-step diplomacy.

Part of the reason for Sadat's apparent shift on Geneva comes from the dizzy pace of international contacts with Egypt. In the space of little more than a week before his speech, Sadat visited Romania, Iran, and Saudi Arabia; talked with Assad, Jordan's King Hussein, Saudi Oil Minister Zaki Yamani, Syrian Air Force Commander Naji Jamil, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, and other Arab leaders. Meanwhile his foreign minister met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hammadi and set a date for a visit to Egypt by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt on Dec. 21. In addition, Egypt's chief of staff arrived in Romania on Nov. 8.

## Sadat Speech Easing Israel to Geneva?

*A European diplomat, knowledgeable in Middle East politics, had this assessment of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's Nov. 9 national address.*

My strong feeling is that Sadat worked out the statement beforehand with the PLO, the Syrians and the Jordanians. All three had representatives there when the speech was made and Sadat spoke to all of them before the speech was delivered. I also think Carter is supporting Sadat's ideas as contained in this speech, and that the Soviets, while strongly anti-Sadat personally, are supporting the posture Sadat assumed in the address. Both the U.S. and the Soviets concur with Sadat's expressed intention to get things going to Geneva as rapidly as possible.

Tactically, I think Sadat's game is to get the Israelis to make concessions, by putting out the line that the PLO as such won't be at Geneva. This is to get the Israelis toward the position of softening up on the actual content of the Palestinians at Geneva—basically to endorse in some fundamental way the PLO's ultimate right to have control over which Palestinians are at Geneva. So, we can assume that Sadat was throwing out a trial balloon, to ease up Israel's insistence on veto power on Palestinian representation at Geneva. If the PLO won't be at Geneva, they'll have a say in who will be there, and this will represent the contours of a general compromise. So it is hoped.

**EXCLUSIVE**

## The Step-By-Step Conspiracy

Counting on the early collapse of chances for a Geneva Mideast peace conference, key policymakers in the U.S. centered around Henry Kissinger and their Israeli Labour Party counterparts—including Moshe Dayan, the ex-Laborite current Foreign Minister—are trying to force the Mideast situation back on a track toward a separate Egypt-Israel deal modeled on Kissinger's 1975 Sinai Pact.”

The central operation of this policy-intelligence nexus was the escalation in southern Lebanon this week. Israeli planes carried out the most extensive bombardment in Lebanon in two years, killing or wounding over 100 people, in retaliation for a series of shellings of Israel

border towns by the so-called “rejection front” of the Palestinian movement. Since the “rejection front” is heavily penetrated by agents of Dayan, this week's Lebanon events clearly bear the marks of Kissinger's attempts to knock Geneva off track and forcefully reintroduce a step-by-step orientation.

Tactically, such a policy course necessitates direct threats at Syria, which is insisting on an Arab hardline on PLO participation at Geneva. Significantly, Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur blamed the Palestinian bombing of Israel on *Syria*. Gur's Israeli allies want Syria to back off from opposition to a separate Egypt-Israeli deal.

Before and after the Lebanon escalation, a host of