

# Dayan Hellbent For Separate Peace

Despite Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's dramatic overtures to Israel in the past two weeks, Israeli response remains an open question. Most Jerusalem observers report widespread public sentiment for peace, and Prime Minister Menachem Begin is under increasing pressure to make tangible concessions in negotiations. The Israeli Cabinet is totally divided on this crucial question.

One fact is clear, however: Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan is feverishly trying to force Israel into a separate peace with Egypt, which would thoroughly upset the prospect of a global and permanent settlement in the Mideast.

During a four-day trip to West Germany last week, Dayan did his best to torpedo international momentum toward such an *overall* peace. Shortly after his arrival, Dayan ostentatiously visited the World War II Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, using the occasion to berate the German population for the rise of Nazi-type sentiments. Ironically, Dayan's harping on German "guilt" did not stop the Foreign Minister from holding two strategy sessions with notorious neo-Nazi Franz-Joseph Strauss. According to the Dec. 1 *Munchener Merkur*, Dayan even confided to Strauss that a separate peace with Egypt would make it "easier to march on Damascus."

On Nov. 30, Dayan tried pitting nation against nation to ensure no global settlement could be reached. Dayan called on the West Germans to take "bold leadership" within the European Economic Community *against* France, the European country consistently demanding recognition of Palestinian rights. The *Washington Post* reported that West German officials were "stunned" and "dismayed." The same day, Dayan openly stated that Israel would gladly sign a "separate peace" with Egypt, regardless of its impact on international relations and U.S.-Soviet relations. After all, he said, "We don't have to make peace with the Russians."

## *Fight Shapes Up*

The Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* summed up the terms of debate among Israeli policymakers Nov. 28. Former *Ma'ariv* Washington correspondent Shmuel Segev identified one group led by Dayan and allied with Henry Kissinger which desires an "Egyptian option" — a separate peace with Israel. Another group, personified by former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon and aligned with U.S. policy makers around Nixon's Secretary of State William Rogers, wants a deal both with Egypt and Jordan. Aligned with the Allon camp is Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Yadin. Yadin has long advocated Israeli territorial concessions on the West Bank, and recently has been in touch with National Security Council policymakers in the U.S., who favor some form of "Palestinian entity" solution on the West Bank.

In his special Nov. 28 address before the Israeli Knesset, Begin specifically stressed that "we are not seeking a separate peace with Egypt," and appealed to Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon to join in the regional peace effort.

However, Begin has left himself open to Dayan's antics by his continued refusal to recognize self-determination rights for Palestinian Arabs and by his strong denunciation of West European peace moves. According to the Nov. 28 Jerusalem Domestic Service, Begin "informed the peoples of Europe that they are the last that should offer advice which might endanger the remnants of the Jewish people" since Europe had been responsible for the 1890s Dreyfus affair and for the Nazi holocaust.

Movement toward substantial concessions can be expected to come from opposition Labour Party circles led by former Foreign Minister Abba Eban. On the NBC-TV "Meet the Press" program Nov. 27, Eban endorsed a "Benelux solution" for the Israeli-West Bank-Jordan area in which three distinct national groups — Palestinian Jewish, Palestinian Arab, and Jordanian — would seek a form of coexistence similar to that of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg in Europe.

Within the Israeli Knesset, a "coalition of doves" numbering at least 15 has recently formed in favor of mobilizing the Israeli population behind recognition of some form of Palestinian Arab self-determination, according to the Nov. 27 *London Observer*.

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## French Ready For Important Role At Geneva

The government of French President Giscard d'Estaing is in line to play a major role in any durable peace settlement in the Middle East that results from an early Geneva peace conference. Since the historic visit of Egyptian President Sadat to Jerusalem, the French have been capitalizing on their reputation as the leading defender of the Arab cause in Europe to put themselves in a position to assume perhaps even the co-chairmanship at Geneva.

France enjoys important political leverage among both the "moderate" Egyptians and Saudis, and the radical "PLO-Libya" camps among the Arabs. This unique position is strengthened by the fact that French intelligence networks extend throughout the region.

With Egypt and Saudi Arabia, France has been working up a plan over several years for the French Dassault firm to construct a major armaments industry in Egypt. With the Saudis providing financing, that deal could supply all Arab armaments needs. More recently, according to the Egyptian paper *Al-Ahram*, plans have been developed for joint Franco-Egyptian construction of nuclear power plants along the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts.

Among the "radicals," French political capital is high because of the Giscard government's persistent support for direct Palestinian representation at a Geneva conference, advocacy of a Palestinian state, and Israeli withdrawal to her 1967 borders.

While there has been no public or official evidence of French involvement in arrangements for the Sadat trip

to Israel, it is certain that the French lent at least an indirect hand. Moroccan King Hassan II, who is closely connected to France and originated the "Arab and Jewish genius" formulation used by Begin in his Knesset speech, was directly involved in those arrangements.

In related actions, French Foreign Minister de Guiringaud initially blocked a Washington-inspired resolution of the European Economic Community executive in support of Sadat's initiative, because, as he explained on French national television, an EEC resolution at that time would enhance the wrong image of Sadat as acting on behalf of the "West" against the

radical Arabs. Prime Minister Barre supplemented these remarks by emphasizing that real concessions must be made by both Arabs and Israelis, especially regarding Israel's rights to secure borders and the rights of the Palestinians.

Barre, who visited Syria shortly thereafter, may have had something to do with the moderate stance the Assad regime has taken toward the Sadat-Begin talks. Accompanying Barre on that trip, de Guiringaud met in Damascus with Palestine National Council president Khaled Fahoum for what French press reported to be "friendly" discussions.

## The Dilemma Facing Hafez Assad

Publicly, Syria has studiously avoided getting too deep into the "rejection" track against Egypt's peace initiatives toward Israel. At a press conference held jointly with French Prime Minister Barre Nov. 30, Assad emphasized that there was "no divorce" between the Egyptian and Syrian regimes, only a difference of procedure on the question of how to reach an overall settlement. Similarly, Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam declared Nov. 27 that "we have not said that we will not continue the dialogue with President Sadat, but we have said that he took an isolated step without consulting other Arab countries." Although attending the Libya "rejection front" summit this week, Assad has taken a public role of conciliator between the rejection group and Egypt.

This is not to underestimate the deep feelings of anger aroused by Egyptian President Sadat's go-it-alone diplomacy. In private, Assad told Barre and French Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud that Sadat was "the Arab Petain, shaking the hands of the enemy in occupied territory."

At this point, four distinct factions can be identified in Syria. Aside from the *Baathist* group, believed to be represented in the government by Information Minister Iskander and Khaddam, there is the *Syrian military*, both air force and ground forces, who are heavily penetrated by Soviet and French influence; the "praetorian guard" elite corps units run by Assad's brother *Rifat*, which has gained notoriety in Syria for its primary concern for preservation of the regime rather than the nation itself; and considerable *Sunni Muslim* tendency in the Syrian bourgeoisie and intelligence units which is heavily penetrated by both Saudi and British influences.

There is danger of a confrontation developing between the Baath ideologues and the Sunnis. Four years ago, Syria was hit by a wave of "Sunni extremism" which was known to be organized out of Saudi Arabia. This week the *Financial Times* of London has begun to predict "Sunni unrest" on the horizon in Syria.

In a lead front-page story Nov. 28 headlined, "Sadat Predicts Bloodshed in Lebanon and Syria," the *Financial Times* quoted Sadat, in an exclusive interview, as warning, "For sure there will be bloodshed in Lebanon and Syria. President Assad is in a difficult position, and the Syrians are in a very delicate position." London's *Daily Telegraph* interpreted this statement to mean that "the powerful and efficient Egyptian intelligence service might take a hand in Syria." According to *Le Monde*, Sadat's warnings have been treated "with diffidence," and Assad in a press conference calmly declared that Syria and Lebanon were both stable countries.

### Congressional Resolution Lauds Middle East

*The following is the text of House Concurrent Resolution 417 introduced into the House of Representatives Nov. 29 by House Majority leader Jim Wright. The resolution was passed that day by voice vote and approved the same day by the Senate.*

"Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring) that it is the sense of the Congress that Anwar el-Sadat, the President of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel, be commended for the courageous steps they have taken to resolve the differences between their nations and to bring peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors, through face-to-face negotiations in the context of a Geneva Conference. We hope this will result in further face-to-face negotiations which will lead to a comprehensive, just and durable peace...."