

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

Kissinger makes a comeback

A circle allied with the former shuttler and war-instigator has staged a new power play.

At stake in the fight over Mideast policy has been whether the United States would break with the decade-long legacy of Kissinger's destructive step-by-step diplomacy, which fostered the 1973 Mideast war and the later destruction of Lebanon, or establish a Geneva-style Arab-Israeli forum in line with the peace plan of Saudi Crown Prince Fahd.

President Reagan and certain of his advisers have been giving the Fahd plan a close look since Reagan won Senate approval last October for the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia. Since then, Kissinger's top agent in the administration, Alexander Haig, along with U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and Israel's fanatical Menachem Begin, have mobilized to keep Washington on Kissinger's policy track.

First, following two weeks of intensive behind-the-scenes talks between Arab governments and the United States, Kirkpatrick registered a veto of a Syrian resolution at the Jan. 20 U.N. Security Council session on Israel's illegal annexation of the Golan Heights.

Her vote was all the more stunning since Syria had substantially softened its resolution calling for voluntary sanctions by U.N. members against Israel in retribution for the Golan grab. The modified Syrian resolution was based on a Saudi plan which earlier this month was reported receiving serious consideration by the White House. Washington is expected to suffer a set-

back in its effort to cultivate closer relations with the moderate Arabs led by Saudi Arabia.

Second, former Carter administration special envoy to the Mideast Sol Linowitz suddenly appeared in the Middle East, shuttling Kissinger-style between Israel and Egypt in the capacity of a "special aide" to Haig. The quiet insertion of Linowitz into Mideast diplomacy is part of Haig's ploy to appoint a special Mideast envoy to continue step-by-step diplomacy in the name of Camp David following the completion of the treaty's provisions, when Israel returns the last part of the Sinai on April 25. The White House was reported to be unenthusiastic about Haig's proposal earlier this month that such an emissary be appointed.

Third, on Jan. 19 Begin warned that he objected to terms of an agreement settling Israel's objections to European participation in a Sinai multinational peacekeeping force. Begin stated outright that the agreement could invite "linkage" between European troop presence and another peace plan, either that of the European Community or Crown Prince Fahd's. Both plans call upon Israel to negotiate with the Palestinians, which Begin has absolutely refused to do.

Israel's threat to delay its withdrawal from Sinai is aimed, according to a well informed British source, at effectively blackmailing the United States and Egypt into

maintaining the Camp David framework of Israeli-Arab bilateral peace treaties, and blocking Egypt's reconciliation with the Arab world.

In meetings with Egyptian Foreign Minister Hassan Ali and President Mubarak on Jan. 18 and 19, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon attempted to win Egypt's approval for extending the deadline of the evacuation of Israelis from the Sinai, and demanded minor modifications in the new Egyptian-Israeli border at the Sinai town of Rafah.

Despite Sharon's boasting that he had won such concessions, there are no signs that Egypt will give Israel any leeway on complying with the withdrawal date.

Speaking before the Israeli parliamentary committee on foreign affairs and security on Jan. 18, Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir complained that the Mubarak regime had hardened its stance on Palestinian autonomy. Under the rubric of Camp David, Egypt and Israel have engaged in a bumpy two-year dialogue on Palestinian autonomy. Now, Mubarak is saying that whatever formula is reached must be approved by the Palestinians themselves, a major departure from Anwar Sadat's policy.

Paris sources warn that Israel may try to destabilize Mubarak, using its allies in the Egyptian Coptic community, just as it tried to destabilize Sadat last year. Israel's rationale is that a destabilized Egypt would justify a last-minute move to break its treaty agreements and retain the Sinai. Such a move by Israel would drastically radicalize the Arab world and create the crisis conditions which Henry Kissinger and his ilk are now primed to "manage."