

Lebanon crisis: next round for Kissinger Commission?

by Richard Cohen in Washington, D.C.

Immediately following the collapse of the Gemayel cabinet in Lebanon on Feb. 5, a rumor campaign emerged to build a climate for the creation of a new presidential commission, dealing with the Middle East, to be headed by former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

U.S. Lebanon policy, as masterminded over the past year by George Shultz and Kissinger, has been a disaster for many months. Following House Speaker Tip O'Neill's announcement that the Democrats would push for an immediate pullout of U.S. Marines, a message was read in Damascus, Teheran, and Moscow: that the U.S. domestic political situation would provide a major opening for a Soviet-engineered escalation in Lebanon.

Now, Kissinger-State Department policies will lead to a more rapid radicalization of forces centered around the Druze and Shi'ite leaderships (Jumblatt and Berri) and the quickened disintegration of the Gemayel regime. A second result would be a dramatic destabilization of the governing Saudi leadership. This destabilization, already foreseen by Kissinger-linked policy planners, would help facilitate a shut-off or slowdown of Persian Gulf oil to the West prior to the 1984 elections.

An oil strategy

These sources say that Kissinger and his collaborators have devised a contingency program for such a cut-off which would gather support from oil-needy Europe and Japan. This would involve a drastic increase in the production of Ibero-American crude, and the revenue from this oil will be used to generate liquidity to temporarily stabilize the unmanage-

able Latin American debt situation. And it is reported that Kissinger and his associates have developed a program for dealing with expected Ibero-American resistance to this looting.

In addition, the Kissinger-sponsored oil crisis would create further pressures, particularly in Europe and in Japan, to move toward accommodation with the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Kissinger business partner and NATO Secretary-General-elect Lord Peter Carrington and elements in the French and Italian governments, an effort has emerged to bring Moscow directly back into the Mideast negotiating picture. With the disintegration of the Multi-National Force (MNF) on Feb. 7 and 8, the Carrington-led forces began an effort to secure Soviet agreement for a United Nations-sponsored force as a replacement. Under conditions of a Persian Gulf crisis in which Soviet assets would play a dominant role, the Carrington-Kissinger crowd would even more boldly demand a direct Moscow role in Mideast negotiations.

Finally, the appointment of Kissinger to such a dominant position would tell Moscow that the opportunity for a major challenge to a weakened West is at hand.

The Kissinger appointment would mean total downgrading of the Pentagon circles around Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Vessey: it would signify the unstoppable rise of a combination of the State Department leadership, the heavily Kissinger-influenced National Security Adviser Robert MacFarlane, and White House Chief of Staff James Baker III and his deputy Michael Deaver, the political architects of Reagan's capitulationist re-election strategy.

According to administration sources, beginning in mid-January Kissinger and Shultz intimate MacFarlane promoted a plan for escalated naval and air assaults in Lebanon, heavily resisted by the top Pentagon hierarchy. It is well known that, since early 1983, a guerrilla war has raged between the Weinberger Defense Department and the Shultz State Department over Mideast policy. Allied with Weinberger is Mideast presidential envoy Donald Rumsfeld, who was reportedly forced to accept the constant presence at all his meetings in the region of Peter Rodman, now of State's Policy Planning Council and so intimate with Kissinger that he ghostwrote the former Secretary of State's autobiography.

Weinberger, joined by then-National Security Adviser Judge William Clark and backed by others in the DOD, accepted the fact that there was no military solution to the crisis in Lebanon. To the extent that their judgment was restricted to Lebanon, they were correct—but the impotence and vulnerability of the Weinberger program for Lebanon rested on the unwillingness of either the President, or the Secretary of Defense, or any of their collaborators to take the Lebanon crisis to the global level.

As *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. has emphasized, the situation in Lebanon could only be resolved when forces actively seeking the destabilization of that nation are removed from the country. In order to accomplish this, the United States would have to be prepared to back up with force an ultimatum to the government of Syria that it either withdraw its forces from Lebanon—or from Damascus.

In addition, the United States would have to demand that the Israeli government remove from power former defense chief Ariel Sharon, the chief architect within Israel of covert attempts to destabilize American assets in the region, and that the Israeli government immediately withdraw all its forces from Lebanon, or all U.S. subsidies would be cut.

The Weinberger posture was reduced to a rearguard effort to counter the Kissinger-State-sponsored destabilizations of Lebanon, beginning with the absurd Shultz-concocted move to deploy the Marines permanently into Lebanon in the first place, and of attempting to use Saudi Arabian clout to influence both Damascus and Lebanese Muslim factions to achieve a stable Gemayel government. The policy was doomed from the beginning, since neither Damascus nor Moscow nor the two primary Lebanese radical factions had any interest in a stable Gemayel government.

The deployment of the Marines into Lebanon not as a military force but as a card in some illusory negotiating game that Shultz and Kissinger hoped to set up with Moscow and Damascus—the bluff factor embedded within the deployment—was hardly credible, and the Marines soon became hostage to terrorist attack aimed at undercutting the U.S. position in the region as a whole.

In addition to the insane Marine deployment card, Kissinger and State banked on the so-called Israeli card. According to administration sources, until November of 1983, Shultz and the Department of State believed, along with MacFarlane, that the Israelis could be used in a meatgrinder war

for the high ground in the Bekaa Valley against Syrian positions. However, by that time the Israeli domestic situation made such an Israeli deployment politically untenable.

The Kissinger-Shultz game was aimed at enticing Moscow and Damascus, which had by as early as September of 1982 been contacted through traditional Kissinger back channels (particularly long-time Kissinger associate Helmut Sonnenfeldt, who has maintained ties to both the Soviet and Israeli leaderships, and former Mideast negotiator Joseph Sisco, who maintains excellent ties to the Syrian regime). When the Kissinger-Shultz "cards" vis-à-vis Syria collapsed, a "redeployment" of U.S. forces was urged, which in one sense corresponded to the Weinberger plea for the removal of the Marines, but on the other hand corresponded to the Shultz-MacFarlane request for a new card—the limited use of U.S. naval and air force against Syrian positions but also against civilian positions in Lebanon.

In addition, it is now believed that under Kissinger's advice, Shultz will press the Europeans, and especially the Saudis, to increase pressure on Syria by threatening to withdraw major subsidies to the Damascus regime. With U.S. guns hitting Moslem civilians in Lebanon, and with Sharonite-linked terrorists assaulting (most recently on Jan. 28) Muslim shrines on Temple Mount in Jerusalem—shrines under the protection of the Saudi royal family—and with the Saudis being asked to burn their bridges to controllers of the Syrian-supported other radical elements threatening destabilization within Saudi Arabia itself, the pro-Western faction currently ruling that country is under pressure indeed.

Background to Kissinger's maneuvers

Kissinger, who had ensconced himself at the center of U.S. Mideast policy soon after Shultz became Secretary of State, was, along with Sisco and Sonnenfeldt, largely responsible for developing a Mideast program in the fall of 1982 directly contrary to Reagan's September 1982 Mideast peace plan dubbed the "Reagan Plan." Indeed, in November of 1982 Kissinger outlined his Middle East plan in an article in the London *Economist*. It included five major points—all of which are on the verge of realization at this time.

Kissinger demanded the dissolution of the Palestine Liberation Organization as it existed at that time. He cheered the genocidal spring 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israeli forces, claiming it had weakened the Arabs. He warned that Saudi Arabia and the promoters of the Saudi "card" must keep out of Lebanon and the Palestinian question, declaring that the Saudis were "overextended" and could be overthrown if they got too deeply involved in these questions. He stated that it would now be timely to establish back channels to the Damascus regime—and thus also to Moscow. And fifth, Kissinger pushed what is now the Shultz plan for Israel—the program that would include forcing drastic reductions in the budget.

If the Kissinger-Shultz faction is not unchecked, the current fiasco in Lebanon will be only the first between now and the election.