

# Lebanese nation, betrayed by U.S., rises up in support of Aoun

by Thierry Lalevée

Any doubt as to the culprits responsible for the assassination on Nov. 22 of René Moawad, the puppet President installed on Nov. 4 to oversee Syria's occupation of all Lebanon, has been quickly lifted by events of the following days. Of course, so many parties had an interest in provoking a new outburst of fighting, that more than one group may have been ultimately involved in the planning and the perpetration of the spectacular bombing. However, the behavior of the Syrian occupation forces in the subsequent 48 hours made clear that as far as Syria is concerned, Moawad's death had no other goal than to create the local and potentially international conditions for launching a fresh military assault against the sole center of Lebanese national resistance, East Beirut.

Less than 48 hours after Moawad's death, and without even waiting for his funeral, Syria imposed the election of another one of their satraps: Elias Hrawi, a third-rate politician in the worst tradition of the Middle East, and—conveniently—a local parliamentarian for a village in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, who lacks all pretense of being independent of his Syrian master. Less than 48 hours after his appointment, Hrawi announced on Nov. 26 that he was giving a 48-hour ultimatum to Prime Minister Gen. Michel Aoun, to resign or face a military offensive aimed at retaking the Baabda Presidential Palace. "Even if there is only one room left in the Palace, I will use it," boasted Hrawi.

But the so-called "legitimate authority" of Lebanon has fewer military divisions than the Vatican, and it is Syria which has moved its forces in to do the dirty job. Between Nov. 26 and Nov. 30, Syria redeployed in the Beirut region close to 10,000 troops, including 8,000 of their so-called Special Forces, many of whom are members of the Arab Knights (sometimes known as Pink Panthers, because of the color of their uniforms) of Syrian Vice President Rifaat al-Assad. In a typical Warsaw Pact-type of military deployment, Syria's ground forces are protected by several lines of T-55 and T-62 tanks, along with 240 mm artillery pieces, the ones already used last summer to pound East Beirut to rubble.

Five days after Hrawi's "ultimatum," the Syrian military offensive had still not taken place. Frustrated, Syria is report-

ed to have reinforced its troops on Dec. 1, sending additional ground forces, but also units of T-72 tanks in Beirut suburbs as an ominous sign that an offensive may be imminent. While there was no public declaration, Syrian troop movements around Beirut indicated that Syria was committed to crushing Aoun. Its failure not only to do so, but to even launch an offensive, is already a major psychological defeat.

## Aoun is far from alone

How was this possible? As of Nov. 26, most did not give Aoun and his followers more than 48 hours of political or even physical survival. On Nov. 28, Aoun was telling the French daily *Le Figaro* "It is going to be the final battle. If we win, we win for good. Otherwise. . . . Yet it is not only against the Syrians that we have to fight, but also against the Americans. They are accepting the end of Lebanon. They want to give Syria compensation for the Golan," referring to the Golan Heights which were taken by Israel in the 1967 war.

As Aoun was speaking, foreign correspondents and others woke up to the new reality which has emerged in Lebanon in the last two weeks. No sooner had Hrawi put out his ultimatum, than more than 50,000 Lebanese began to gather around Baabda as a human chain to protect Aoun's headquarters against a military onslaught. In the following days, the crowd grew to 200,000 and even more. And they were not simply residents of East Beirut. The inhabitants of entire villages from the region drove down to join in; Lebanese from Syrian-occupied West Beirut crossed the demarcation line to stage anti-Syrian demonstrations. On Nov. 30, even a leading West Beirut Muslim cleric, Imam Najjar, praised Aoun as "Allah's beloved." Ongoing events in East Germany were being reflected in Beirut, in stark contrast to the *Realpolitik* in Washington, where the U.S. State Department has repeatedly called for Aoun's resignation.

As opposed to Hrawi's hysterical self-description as the "legitimate authority" of Lebanon, the demonstrations have made it clear that the real Lebanon, Christian and Muslim alike, finds its leadership with Michel Aoun. It is predominantly a young Lebanon—which has never voted for the corrupt and paid-off parliamentarians who claim to represent

the country—a young Lebanon which has no wish to perpetuate the feudal system of the last decades, be it in the political or even religious realm. Christian Maronite Patriarch Sfeir, who had to accede to the Vatican's refusal to support Aoun in the nation's darkest hour, has himself been made a target of the demonstrators, who are demanding that "We need a fighting church as in Poland."

This reality has forced a change in the international balance of forces. At last, France decided to move again to support its longtime friend. On Nov. 29, some 40 French parliamentarians left for East Beirut to express their solidarity and support. The same day, another French warship was sent to Lebanon with naval forces and helicopters.

But the ill-fated process begun when a rump of paid-off parliamentarians met at Taif, Saudi Arabia in late October to choose the puppet Moawad, still retains its deadly dynamic. No nation has yet dared to defy both Washington and Moscow by taking a clear stand, demanding an immediate withdrawal of the Syrian troops. On Nov. 29, Paris issued a warning that it will oppose "any of the sides" which takes the initiative "of relaunching the fighting." The statement had the effect of temporarily catching Hrawi and the Syrians off balance, and momentarily decreasing the threat against East Beirut. The United States followed suit by sending urgent letters to Damascus and Moscow, warning against an offensive.

Yet, can anyone believe that this will resolve Lebanon's problems? A freeze of all military operations, without a political solution, will mean a de facto partition of the ravaged country. No Lebanese, and certainly not Aoun, want that. Unless Syria is ordered to get out, sooner or later the confrontation will be inevitable.

Another consideration which might force the great powers to become more active in protecting Lebanon, is the threat that a Syrian onslaught against Aoun might be immediately followed up with an Israeli thrust. On Nov. 23, 25, and 27, the Israeli Air Force conducted pinpoint bombings of several terrorist bases run by Ahmed Jibril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in the Bekaa valley, just a few miles from Syrian positions. As of Nov. 30, the forces of General Lahad in South Lebanon started deploying their own tanks and artillery pieces to attack the Syrians in the rear. Israel is also reported to have warned that any deployment of T-72 tanks into Beirut would become a *casus belli*. On the same day, an Israeli spokesman warned Syria against any "military move" which would be a threat to "Israeli interests." Israel's Air Force is reported to be ready to intervene in case Syria deploys its own Air Force into Lebanon.

Hence, the countdown for a new Middle East war may have already started—thanks to the cowardice of the Western powers and their refusal to support in Lebanon, what they claim to be supporting in Eastern Europe, namely, freedom and independence.

## Lev Zaikov assuming powerful Soviet role

by Argus

*Argus is the pen name of a leading U.S. analyst of Soviet policy, especially in the military arena. He has been an observer of Soviet affairs for the last 40 years.*

In the blank below, write the name of the Soviet official who:

- gave an interview to *Newsweek* three years ago in which he stated that he alternately chairs the Politburo, Secretariat, and the Defense Council in Moscow.
- wearing a Lenin-style black peaked cap, smiling and waving to the crowd, and engaged in a tête-à-tête with comrades on either side, was given flattering closeup shots atop the Lenin Mausoleum as he and his Politburo colleagues reviewed the "Bolshevik Revolution" anniversary parade in Red Square on Nov. 7, 1989.
- holds an unprecedented number of high positions for any single official now or at any time in the past.
- supervises a broad range of external/internal security affairs while overseeing administration of the Soviets' military-industrial complex (VPK).
- attends and/or officiates at some of the most important conferences, particularly politically sensitive ones, and other meetings and plenums held under the auspices of the Central Committee.

\_\_\_\_\_ (official's name)

If you wrote "Mikhail Gorbachov" or "Yegor Ligachov," you have been reading the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Times*, the great majority of European newspapers, etc., to the exclusion of mainline Soviet press organs, such as *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and for that matter, excluding *EIR*.

If you wrote "Lev Zaikov," you are correct. You obviously know that this powerful figure is the real-life symbol of a behind-the-scenes shadow cabinet ruling Soviet Russia today. And even grade school students know that anything or anybody that casts a shadow must be illuminated in some way. Zaikov is definitely in the spotlight. Yet our media, Moscow correspondents, and would-be TV "newsmen" do not or choose not to perceive what is displayed before their very noses.

However, to unbiased, between-the-lines readers of the