

Who ought to defend what in Lebanon?

by Allen Douglas

As three aircraft carrier battle groups assemble off Beirut, part of the largest U.S. Mediterranean armada in postwar history, the question on everyone's mind is: "Will the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Forces act as he did in Grenada?"

This prospect has sent up a chorus of howls from the press and KGB-linked Democratic Party circles in the United States, as well as European circles who either think they have a deal with the Soviets or are just plain terrified. President Reagan's erstwhile "stoutest European supporter," Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, joined the appeasement crew with a blunt message on Nov. 7 that "any step" to hit back at the elements responsible for the Oct. 23 Marine compound bombing would cause "damage to U.S.-British relations."

The following day French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, speaking before the national Parliament, made a veiled attack on the United States for "fleet movements and singularly aggressive statements." But perhaps the most dramatic attempts at appeasement were organized in Atlanta, Georgia on Nov. 6-9 by former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. The scene was a "Middle East Consultation" sponsored by the newly created Carter Center at Emory University, and hosted by the Carter administration including former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, former Carter National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Panama Canal negotiator Sol Linowitz.

Vance, like most other speakers, pressed for "conciliation with the Soviets," virtually at all costs. A senior KGB official based at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., Aleksander Zotov, spoke on "Soviet Interests in the Middle East," followed by the Syrian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Farouk al-Sharaa. Representing Jordan was the top representative of the Malthusian Club of Rome in the Middle

East, Crown Prince Hassan, known to be covetous of his brother's throne.

The situation on the ground in the Middle East grows more acute by the moment, with the Syrians firing on U.S. jets and Israel reinforcing its troops in Lebanon. The Syrian-backed onslaught against Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat is now culminating in a military offensive to put the PLO guerrilla movement under Damascus's control. Arafat has been defeated following a week of bloodletting which left hundreds of Palestinian civilians dead in the northern Lebanese camps of Nahr-al Bared and Baddawi.

By gaining control of the Palestinian guerrilla apparatus, Soviet-controlled Syria will wield a powerful terrorist capability. Two of the strongest factions within the guerrilla movement, led by Dr. George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh, are vigorously supported by Khomeini. Palestinian militancy will increasingly be integrated into the Teheran-based "Islamintern" (see article, page 35). The State Department is already trying to sell the formula that the demise of Arafat, the only moderating force within the PLO, is clearing the way for Jordan and Israel to make a deal on the autonomy of the West Bank. But the new terrorist capability given Syria and Iran with the collapse of Arafat points to increased terror in the region and nothing else. Already Jordan has become a target with the terrorist attacks on five Jordanian diplomats since the beginning of the month, one of which claimed the life of the Jordanian ambassador to Greece. Such attacks are calculated to deter King Hussein from any move toward talks with Israel over the West Bank.

In the Persian Gulf, as commander of the U.S. Middle East Force Rear Adm. John Adams warned recently, Khomeini is still poised to shut the Straits of Hormuz, using the excuse of stepped-up Iraqi attacks against Iran. And, follow-

ing the attack against Israeli barracks in Tyre, the Iranian terrorist-backed Jihad Islami delivered a message to Agence France Presse that it would escalate against Israel as well as perpetrate terrorism outside the Middle East.

Meanwhile, if the United States stands impotently in the wings, the Shultz-Kissinger option of an Israeli surgical strike against the Syrians, confined to a Lebanese battlefield and therefore presumably "safe" in terms of a superpower confrontation, would simply increase the prestige of Syria as the "front-line state" versus the "Zionists and their American imperialist allies," amid an increasing radicalization of the Middle East. That would solve nothing, either for Lebanon—since the Syrians and their allies would come back—or for the United States. The issue, as everyone knows, is not the question of tit for tat but a strategic question: Will the United States, which has committed itself to stabilize the bleeding nation of Lebanon, retreat from that commitment in the face of the most obvious Soviet aggression?

While the momentum of U.S. mobilization against the Soviets has slowed after Grenada, the reality remains that the Soviet Union is still on a global offensive, and it will be only a matter of time until "another shoe drops." At that point, Reagan, who has shown a definite capability for command decisions, first in his beam weapons defense speech of March 23, and later in the Grenada preemptive strike against a Soviet terrorist stronghold, will be the commander-in-chief, and *Reagan alone*. It is that prospect, more than anything else, which appalls those who think they have a deal with the Soviets. Bold moves by Reagan will not only upset any short-term deals, but will potentially destroy the entire Pugwash apparatus of the postwar period under which the United States was slated to be reduced to a second-rate power.

What Washington must assert, and assert soon, is that there will be no more toying with Lebanese sovereignty by Soviet surrogates such as the Syrians. The United States is in Lebanon at the direct invitation of the Lebanese government, with a mandate to achieve stability and sovereignty for the Lebanese nation. Contrary to State Department propaganda, the U.S. task is *not* to ensure reconciliation talks per se, but to use its mandate to carry out the necessary policing measures to keep stability in the country. This definition of mission means that instead of sitting like patsies at the Beirut Airport, American forces must commit whatever is necessary to achieve stability, including deploying enough force to drive the Syrians out of Lebanon, at minimum out of the hills overlooking Beirut. Furthermore, if the United States is concerned about developing the necessary information to punish those responsible for the Oct. 23 Beirut bombing, it should be kept in mind that in Grenada an effective policing action was carried out and the evidence, known to be there beforehand, materialized by the warehouseful.

Will this policy result in a U.S.-Soviet showdown and World War III? That cannot be ruled out. But it must be clearly understood what the United States is facing is Soviet aggression against Lebanon through Syrian proxies. Therefore, the United States either adopts a policy of constant

backdown here and across the globe, in which case the Soviets are handed whatever they desire, or the United States decides to stand and fight, not in a random assertion of power, but in a circumstance in which the United States is morally and strategically correct. If the Soviets opt for World War III, that was what they planned at some point anyway, since they do not suffer the same sort of delusions as their dupes in the West: They know very well they are not "peace loving peoples."

Western Europe braces for Islamic terrorist onslaught

by Thierry LaLavée

In coordination with American and Israeli intelligence services, most Western European agencies are on a quiet alert to face Beirut-style terrorist operations in Europe in the upcoming weeks. Though cooperation among the numerous European intelligence and police services is far from effective, the November meeting of the European interior ministries, better known as the Club of Berne, determined to put their intelligence services on alert. The exceptional meeting was attended by special delegates rather than the ministers themselves. These delegates' task was to deal with the "truck threat hanging over Europe," as observers described it.

There has been little information filtered through the press on incidents of dynamite-filled trucks or cars being used for terrorist operations in Western Europe, but two documented cases have already occurred. In one, immediately after the Oct. 23 Beirut bombings, a red Citroen truck was seen leaving Florence in the direction of France, and then disappeared—as far as public coverage was concerned. In a second, more dangerous case, a dynamite-filled car was found on Nov. 7 in one of the busiest squares in Rome. In the United States, the threat has already gone beyond the warning stage with the Nov. 7 bombing on Capitol Hill.

The reality of the threat is shown by the report of an important international terrorist gathering that took place at the Hotel President in Geneva on Oct. 23, the very day nearly 300 American and French soldiers were killed. Present at the meeting were unnamed representatives of the Abu Nidal group, the German Baader-Meinhof gang, and the French Action Directe. Chairing that gathering was Ali Duba, the Syrian intelligence coordinator who defined the agenda: an upcoming "limited" Syrian-Israeli war which will lead to a Soviet decision to use their SS-21s as a show of strength against the United States, and terrorist deployments into France and West Germany.

Most immediately in danger, reported French sources, are American installations in West Germany. Following the Geneva conference, Iranian commandos were seen crossing into West Germany and France, and members of these teams