

Partition of Lebanon rapidly becoming a fact

by Judith Wyer

With his Jan. 4 announcement that he would seek a dialogue with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad following the freeing of U.S. navy flyer Lt. Robert Goodman, President Ronald Reagan contradicted his stated commitment to the unity of Lebanon and his pledge, given only two weeks earlier, to bring about a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Reagan's presidential campaign advisers, along with Secretary of State George Shultz, have apparently sold the President on an early withdrawal of the U.S. Marines from Lebanon to avoid a brawl with Congress over the issue once it convenes Jan. 23: a brawl which, these advisers threaten, would play to the advantage of Reagan's front-running Democratic competitor Walter Mondale.

Shultz, since his Dec. 17 meeting with Henry Kissinger, has been urging Reagan to adopt a "political solution" to Lebanon, a polite term for Kissinger's decade-old plan to split Lebanon between Israel and Syria.

Two contradictory policies

But, as *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche warned in a year-end statement on "U.S. Policy Toward Lebanon," President Reagan will "never be allowed to suspect that this 'political solution' is part of pushing through the 'New Yalta' submission to an enlarged Soviet Empire which Carrington and Kissinger are pushing. . . . Unless someone gets the facts through to the President's attention, the United States will continue to have, simultaneously, two contradictory policies in Lebanon."

LaRouche, a declared Democratic presidential candidate and the only such candidate to challenge the Kissinger partition policy, wrote in his Dec. 30 statement that "there is in effect no consistent U.S. policy toward Lebanon; there are two directly opposing policies afoot, each of which nullifies the other entirely. The first of these two policies is a diluted continuation of the earlier 'Reagan plan' for the Middle East, which I support as a workable approach to developing a sound Middle East policy. The second, opposing policy seeks to obtain conditions for withdrawal of U.S. military presence in Lebanon through the triple-partition of that nation; this wicked policy, which I strongly oppose, is sometimes dignified by the misleading name of 'political solution.'"

LaRouche said that the partition of Lebanon conforms to

the long-term plan of undermining every sovereign nation of the Mideast, thereby undermining any prospect of the Reagan Mideast plan. Lebanon's partition ushers in a plan for the dismemberment of states through the spread of savage Khomeini-style fundamentalism, as outlined by British "Arabist" Bernard Lewis of Princeton University. LaRouche draws out the strategic purpose in such a policy, to destroy the United States and its Mideast allies and turn the area over to the Soviets as part of a New Yalta which Kissinger and his business partner Lord Carrington are facilitating. More profoundly, such a humiliation of the United States in the Middle East will be used to pressure the President to back away from his commitment to beam-weapons strategic defense, a policy goal shared by Moscow and the Kissinger-Carrington "Pug-wash" crowd in the West.

Key to Reagan's slide toward the disastrous "political solution" option—jeopardizing his reiterated commitment to Lebanese national sovereignty—has been the pressure of the 1984 presidential election. Following his Dec. 17 tête-à-tête with Kissinger, Shultz reportedly convinced the President to court the "peace vote" and offset his image as a warmonger—an image concocted, incidentally, by Shultz's co-thinkers in the notoriously KGB-influenced U.S. national media—by piecing together a "political solution" that would allow the U.S. to extricate itself militarily from Lebanon.

This solution, say Washington insiders, would consist of setting up three zones in Lebanon: a southern zone administered by Israel, a northern zone administered by Syria, and a greater Beirut under a modified government of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel—de facto partition.

Courting Syria

The loudest herald of U.S. capitulation to the partition plan is the sudden courtship of Syria. Starting the last week of December, previously widely voiced accusations by U.S. administration figures and the press that Syria backs the Iranian-deployed terrorist bombings in Lebanon ceased. White House Middle East envoy Donald Rumsfeld arrived in Beirut on Jan. 4 carrying a plan which he will present to Gemayel and later to Syrian President Assad. The plan is said to outline the limited deployment of the Lebanese army and police to replace the U.S. Marines once they are removed from the

airport south of Beirut. The army will move into a 40-mile coastal strip to the north up to the Syrian-held enclave at the village of Barbarah and to the south to the Israeli-controlled enclave at the Awali River.

This de facto partition scheme fits into the "greater Syria" dreams of Syrian President Assad, who had refused to meet Rumsfeld during his trip to Damascus last month, but released Lieutenant Goodman on Jan. 3 in the hopes of a payoff in the form of a chunk of Lebanon.

It was during welcome-home ceremonies for Goodman at the White House on Jan. 4 that Reagan declared that the release "affords us a unique opportunity. . . . I took advantage of this opportunity to write to the president to Syria and call for Syrian cooperation in securing peace in Lebanon."

Both Kissinger, who set up the pro-Syrian tilt, and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who played the role of securing Goodman's release from Syria, are not newcomers to the cynical game of manipulating hostages in the Middle East to private political ends. It was Kissinger who put into motion the Iranian hostage affair by engineering the entry of the Shah into the United States, and during that dismal episode Jackson traveled to Teheran to bargain for the release of the U.S. hostages taken by Khomeini.

Bringing in the Soviets

"Courting" Syria is meaningless unless the suitor is brought home to meet Mother, in this case Mother Russia, the military supplier of the Assad marcher-lord regime. In a late-November interview, Assad affirmed that to engage his cooperation in peace efforts, Washington would have to accept his military ally the U.S.S.R. as an equal partner in peacemaking. Shultz is a vocal proponent of giving the Soviets diplomatic clout in the Mideast. But under circumstances of deteriorated East-West relations, such a concession would simply advance Kissinger's "New Yalta" scheme to surrender the Middle East to Moscow.

The withdrawal of the U.S.-led multinational forces (MNF) was signaled by the announcement from Paris on Jan. 3 that nearly 500 troops from the French force, considered the strongest contingent next to the U.S. Marines, were to be deployed to the United Nations Force (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon by the end of the month. United Nations sources say that French President François Mitterrand, the firmest supporter of the U.S. military stance in Lebanon, now favors replacing the MNF with a United Nations force heavily Western European in composition.

The hitch is that the Soviet Union has veto power over such a U.N. deployment, giving Moscow a voice in the future of Lebanon. A high-ranking Soviet is to arrive in Paris later in January to discuss the U.N. force plan with the Mitterrand government.

Britain, which has a small contingent within the MNF, also leans towards replacing it with U.N. forces. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on Jan. 5 urged caution in withdrawing the MNF for fear of a Muslim-Christian mas-

sacre and suggested the U.N. send a replacement. Last month Italy, the fourth partner in the MNF, announced that it was halving its 2,200-man force in Lebanon.

For their part, U.S.-allied Arab leaders are also attempting to accommodate Moscow's bid for an increased role in the Mideast, out of fear of a superpower showdown. Lebanese Foreign Minister Elie Salem conferred with Soviet Ambassador to Lebanon Aleksandr Soldatov on Dec. 30, while Lebanese President Gemayel conferred with the U.S. Ambassador, Reginald Bartholomew. The Lebanese urged both superpowers to cool the Lebanon powderkeg. Following the Salem-Soldatov meeting, Salem told the press: "Israel must withdraw from Lebanon without prior conditions. . . . The Multinational Force can withdraw along with Israel because they are not doing anything anyway."

The role of Arafat

Kissinger and Shultz's domination of U.S. Lebanon policy may also put PLO leader Yassir Arafat in the position of promoting Moscow's ambitions in the region, through default. Privately Arafat is said to support Egyptian President Mubarak and the Reagan peace plan, but publicly he has established a fallback option, for fear that Reagan may not succeed in delivering Israel to the negotiating table. During a Jan. 3 meeting with the PLO Executive Committee in Tunis, Arafat called for future peace talks to be conducted in keeping with the Arab League's Fez Plan, which calls for Soviet participation in comprehensive peace talks.

The background to this is Arafat's Dec. 20 escape from Tripoli, Lebanon, where he had been besieged for weeks by Syrian-backed mercenaries and then by Israel. Indications that he would rapidly move to split the PLO and form a government-in-exile to join Jordan's King Hussein in talks on the West Bank, in line with the Reagan plan, were corroborated two days later when Arafat met Mubarak in Egypt to discuss a joint strategy on the Palestine question. Arafat's visit ended the six-year political isolation of Egypt in the Arab world that followed its role in the Camp David talks with Israel. The Mubarak government has stated its readiness to move the stalled Reagan Plan forward through its dialogue with Arafat and Hussein.

Israel's response to the Mubarak-Arafat meeting confirms Arafat's doubts, since Israeli Prime Minister Shamir called the meeting a blow to peace in the Mideast and accused Egypt of breaching the Camp David accords.

The Shamir government is unnerved by the U.S. tilt toward Syria, fearing that it will undermine the May 17, 1983 Israel-Lebanon agreement, which calls for simultaneous withdrawal from Lebanon by both Israel and Syria. Syria's position is that the United States and Israel must first withdraw, and then Syria will move out. Israel began its most intense bombing yet of Palestinian extremist and Iranian-backed suicide terrorists in Lebanon the first week of January, preparing for an Israeli troop pullback from the southern Lebanese town of Sidon to south of the Awali River.