



Syrians, Falange, Israelis Ready Final Assault On Palestinians

Soviets Demand Immediate Geneva Conference

Oct. 9 (NSIPS) — The Lebanon crisis has entered its most dangerous phase since the civil war erupted 18 months ago; as the last weeks of October approach the possibilities of a general Middle East war and U.S.-Soviet confrontation are increasing dramatically. Extremely delicate talks are now ongoing between Syrian and Palestinian negotiators in the eastern Lebanese town of Chtaura, which both western and Socialist sector observers regard as the last-stand effort to avert a general crisis.

The backdrop to the talks are the following key developments: an official Oct. 7 Soviet warning to United Nations General Secretary Kurt Waldheim (see below for excerpts) that if a Geneva Middle East peace conference is not convened within weeks, "a new military outburst" can break out "at any moment"; the entrance of 1200 Iraqi Army soldiers into Lebanon, bringing to at least 4000 the number of Iraqi troops now fighting on the side of the besieged left-Palestinian forces; open and ominous threats by the Syrian leadership and the Lebanese fascist militias to launch an all-out assault against the remaining left-Palestinian strongholds in the mountains east of Beirut and in Lebanon's three major cities; and the increasing Israeli involvement in southern Lebanon, including the virtual annexation of growing sections in the southern region in open collaboration with the fascist Falange Party.

The Israeli encroachment in Lebanon intersects a major fight which has broken out within Israel between warhawk Defense Minister Shimon Peres and traditionalist Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Rabin has called for Peres' resignation.

French Warmaking Role

The escalation of the Mideast crisis is the result of the mid-week sabotage by Atlanticist French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing of an urgent appeal by the Egyptian government and by Lebanese left leader Kamal Jumblatt for the French to intervene diplomatically to pressure the Syrian invaders to withdraw and to help convene a Paris "round-table" conference of all the parties to the Lebanon conflict. Jumblatt travelled to Paris to "re-interest Europe in the problems of Lebanon, especially at a moment when Syrian troops were advancing," reported London's Daily Telegraph, and warned French officials that failure to act could trigger a dangerous international conflict. Giscard answered that France would only adopt a "low profile" and made "contacts," not "initiatives." Diplomatic observers report that French Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud "threw cold water" on Jumblatt's request. The Italian Socialist Party paper Avanti Oct. 7 bitterly charged that "Paris does not accept the proposition of making pressure on Syria for the withdrawal of troops," and that, as a result, the Syrian government had "decided on a total offensive ... to definitively truncate the Palestinian resistance.... The West," Avanti

dramatically concluded, "could actually witness the massacre of the Palestinian forces" if it refused to act.

In a major strategic assessment released Oct. 4, the Palestine News Agency, Wafa, detailed the inevitable next phase of the Lebanon war — a "Stalingrad battle for the cities" — if Henry Kissinger and his Syrian army, Lebanese fascist, and Israeli warhawk henchmen were not absolutely stopped (see Wafa excerpts below).

Wafa's statement was followed by ominous signs from Damascus and Lebanon that an escalation was underway. Damascus newspapers mid-week wildly praised the Syrian army's "noble" role in Lebanon and reported the tour of Syrian Maj. General Naji Jamil of southern Lebanon; Jamil's last tour preceded a Syrian military escalation of the South. The Oct. 7 Jerusalem Post reported that Syrian Chief of Staff Hikmat Shehabi, estimated to be lukewarm about Syria's Lebanon involvement, was relieved of his direct command of the armed forces and replaced by Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas, to be aided by Jamil, in coordinating the Lebanon war. Tlas and Jamil are the diehard superhawks around Syrian dictator Hafez Assad who have for months pushed an extensive Syrian assault against the left-Palestinian alliance.

Military Showdown

Syrian troops and tank reinforcements are now moving in Lebanon's south. At the same time, reports indicate hundreds of fascist Falangists are being sent into Lebanon through Israel, armed to the teeth with Israeli weaponry. Late reports from Lebanon are that a rightist offensive has begun in the southern regions, concentrated on the port city of Sidon, the remaining lifeline for the left.

Left-Palestinian forces were put on military alert and full mobilization in Sidon and Beirut this week in anticipation of the Syrian offensive. Tight security measures have been imposed in both cities to root out "fifth columns" collaborating with Syria; yesterday the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command was kicked out for being a Syrian agent. Today's Italian press reports that a wider Syrian-Iraqi war in Lebanon can be expected with the entrance of Iraqi troops into Lebanon.

Not much hope, finally, is pinned on the Chtaura talks. Repeatedly in negotiations, the Syrians have demanded that the Palestinian forces' relations with the left be sundered and that the current Palestinian leadership be replaced by pro-Syrian puppets. Kissinger's position at the negotiations was expressed by a New York Times editorial, which warned the Palestinians that if they did not accept surrender conditions, general war would erupt in the Mideast over Lebanon.

Israeli Warhawks on Carpet

A key determinant, however, of the Lebanese crisis is the

internal battle breaking out in Israel. Rabin this week accused Peres of "conniving" with the intelligence creation "Gush Emunim" religious expansionist fanatics in the West Bank to undermine the government's attempts to maintain a concessionary foreign policy in the West Bank for later negotiations with the Arab states. Israeli moderate newspapers have sharply criticized Peres' refusal to carry out Cabinet directives to dismantle the Gush Emunim invasion of the West Bank. This week Peres appeared on the podium simultaneously with Gush leader Moshe Levinger, who earlier this week had called for open insurrection against the government, declaring it should be

treated as "the earlier generation treated the British occupying forces."

Simultaneously, a slew of Watergate-Lockheed scandals have hit Rabin allies, and "utopian" elements within the intelligence establishment have declared open warfare against Rabin and traditionalist allies on the issue of Rabin's alleged soft position on terrorism. This Kissinger-tailored operation is meant to prevent Rabin from seriously considering a Soviet call for a Geneva Conference Oct. 1, which included formulations tailored to win Israeli moderate approval and which, Israeli sources report, is receiving "serious consideration" from the Israeli government.

Soviet Proposal To UN For Geneva Conference

The following are extensive excerpts of an Oct. 7 letter from A. Dobrynin, Acting Chairman of the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations General Assembly, on a proposal for a Geneva Peace Conference for a Mideast settlement. The letter has been reported in the European press but blacked out in the major press in the U.S.:

Proposal by the Soviet Union concerning a settlement in the Middle East and the Geneva Peace Conference

Among the complex international problems requiring a solution in the interests of the preservation and strengthening of peace, the problem of a Middle East settlement is particularly acute. The red-hot tension in the Middle East is not abating. The situation in this region is extremely precarious and unstable. At any moment there may be a new military outburst there.

The peoples of the Middle East countries are living in a state of uncertainty, under a permanent threat to their security. They are being prevented from devoting their efforts to peaceful construction and the improvement of living conditions. Attempts are being made to keep the Arab people of Palestine in the position of an exiled people.

The entire course of events in the Middle East in recent years demonstrates one fact: there cannot and will not be peace in this region until the causes which gave rise to the Middle East conflict have been removed: the occupation of the Arab territories by Israel, the denial of their inalienable rights to the Palestine Arab people and the continuing state of war. It is impossible to hope that it will be sufficient to eliminate any one particular individual hotbed of armed conflict in order to restore peace in the Middle East.

The tragic events in Lebanon provide a very clear confirmation of all this. The Lebanese crisis could not have arisen if a comprehensive political settlement had been achieved in the Middle East. There is another undeniable fact: if there had been such a settlement, or if serious efforts had been made to achieve one, it would have been easier to find a solution to the problems rending this small Middle Eastern country.

Only those who are trying for their own narrow ends to preserve the existing situation in the Middle East can oppose a broad political settlement or work against its achievement.

It is the conviction of the Soviet Union that the situation in the Middle East requires urgent measures capable of achieving a change from war to peace there.

The Soviet Union has already proposed a resumption for this purpose of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. This is precisely the forum which has been recognized as being politically acceptable by all the interested parties.

Concerned about the dangerous course of events in the Middle East, the Soviet Union now again appeals to all the parties directly involved in the Middle East conflict and to all the participants in the Geneva Peace Conference to resume the

work of the Conference. The Soviet Union, for its part, would be prepared to take part in the work of the Conference in October-November 1976...

In an attempt to expedite the achievement of a Middle East settlement and for this purpose to promote the resumption of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Soviet Union submits for the consideration of the participants the following proposal for the agenda of the Conference:

1. Withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

2. Realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestine Arab people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own State.

3. Preservation of the right to an independent existence and to security of all the States directly participating in the conflict: the Arab States bordering on Israel, on the one hand, and the State of Israel, on the other, and the granting to them of appropriate international guarantees.

4. Cessation of the state of war between the Arab States concerned and Israel.

In the opinion of the Soviet Union, this proposed agenda covers all the key aspects of a settlement. It takes into account the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties directly involved in the conflict — the Arab States, the Palestine Arab people and the State of Israel.

With regard to the organization of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Soviet Union has already expressed the view that it should be conducted in two phases. The Palestine Liberation Organization should naturally participate in the work of the Conference from the very beginning and with equal status...

The Soviet Union is convinced that a real possibility exists of eliminating the underlying causes of the Middle East conflict and agreeing on a comprehensive settlement. To this end, it is prepared to press on with the work, together with all the other participants in the Geneva Peace Conference.

PLO Warns:

"Battle Of Stalingrad" In Lebanon

Oct. 8 (NSIPS) — The following are excerpts of a major strategic assessment released by the Palestine Liberation Organization news agency, Wafa, in Beirut, Oct. 4, 1976. Wafa concedes a likely Syrian victory in Aley and Bhamdoun by the Syrian Army and rightist forces but warns that nothing less than a "Stalingrad" battle for the cities is developing:

The long-awaited battle for the mountains finally began last week. After almost four months of preparation the Syrian Army launched the campaign which, Damascus hopes, will end the