

Begin Overrules Dayan On Lebanon Truce; Int'l Consensus Grows For Mideast Peace

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin overruled his Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and backed a truce in southern Lebanon last week, that ended ten days of heavy fighting between Palestinians and Lebanese right-wing extremists supported by the Israelis. Israeli troops and tanks fighting in Lebanon were immediately recalled to Israel.

The truce, agreed to by Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as well as Begin, is the first real fruit of long-term peace efforts undertaken by the Europeans and the Arabs, with the assistance of certain circles in the United States. As the international has noted, the tentative PLO agreement with Israel over Lebanon is a diplomatic first that increases chances for reconvening Geneva peace talks and for clearing the way for a viable Middle East peace settlement. The U.S. side of the peace push was reflected in President Carter's stated willingness to bring the PLO to the negotiating table, at his Sept. 29 press conference.

Begin has defused another constant Israeli provocation by refusing to issue new permits to the Gush Emunim religious sect to set up new settlements on the West Bank. The insistent Gush Emunim policy of populating that Israeli-occupied area has been a red flag to the Arabs signaling Israel's unwillingness to negotiate territorial withdrawals. On Sept. 28, Begin ordered out the Israeli military to block several Gush Emunim groups which had defied his order to refrain from establishing new settlements.

The Background Of The Truce

Arab press sources report that William Scranton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and now a member of President Carter's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, has been secretly meeting with PLO officials since March preparing for PLO recognition of Israel in return for a UN resolution that would identify Palestinian rights.

Two weeks ago, in an interview with ABC-TV, PLO leader Yasser Arafat for the first time publicly committed himself to recognize Israel in exchange for a new UN resolution acknowledging the right of the Palestinian people to set up an independent Palestinian homeland. Arafat's overture is in keeping with Scranton's efforts to clear the way for such a resolution. According to the same Arab press sources, Scranton is also behind negotiations to have the PLO form a government in exile.

The PLO itself played an initiating role in the Lebanese ceasefire. The London *Financial Times* reported that the PLO was the first to accept a truce agreement with the Lebanese government. Initially, Israel refused to accept the ceasefire, and it was reported in Jerusalem that this was the decision of Foreign Minister Dayan, in Washington, working through U.S. State Department official Philip Habib and Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz. Dayan refused the truce because he did not want to "throw the Christian population to the dogs," according to a televised interview with the Foreign Minister. Shortly afterwards, Begin and Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman countermanded Dayan's decision, and Israeli troops were pulled out of Lebanon.

According to a former State Department official, the traditionalists in the State Department are backing the latest peace efforts implying recognition of the PLO. (See interview below.) A current State Department official told a press conference the same day the truce was announced that the U.S. was keeping an "open mind" about a new UN resolution that "would enhance" the status of the PLO.

Consensus Grows In Favor Of Peace

International pressure on Carter to facilitate the integration of the PLO into an overall Mideast settlement is growing rapidly. The forum for this drive is the UN General Assembly. Last week, French Foreign Minister De Guiringaud welcomed "the PLO's presence here" as evidence of increasing PLO "association" in the process of working out a peace settlement. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko appealed directly to the Israelis to use the current "good chances" to agree to a settlement that would correspond to Israel's "own national interests." Gromyko emphasized Soviet support for Israel's existence as a "sovereign independent state." Italian Foreign Minister Forlani noted Italy's "de facto recognition" of the PLO, called for reconvening the Geneva conference with the PLO agreeing to the "form of Palestinian participation," and said Italy was "disposed to participate in an international system of guarantees" for Israel's security.

The notion of guarantees for Israel is rapidly becoming a focus for the ongoing negotiations, and provides Carter substantial leverage in dealing with Israel should he go along with the emerging consensus for the creation of a Palestinian state. According to an informed U.S. jour-

nalist, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi told Washington officials, and later asserted at the UN, that Egypt would support international security guarantees for Israel including "buffer zones, demilitarized zones, the establishment of UN forces, reduction of forces or arms in areas adjacent to the borders, or even the use of modern early warning systems." Along the same lines, Lebanon has requested the reconstitution of the 1948-49 Mixed Israel-Lebanon Armistice Commission, headed by a French colonel, to patrol the Israel-Lebanon border.

To block Carter from moving towards recognition of the PLO, informed Capitol Hill sources report that New York Senator Jacob Javits and New Jersey Senator Clifford Case, both powerful forces in the U.S. Jewish lobby, are preparing an anti-Carter propaganda barrage should Carter tilt toward the PLO.

Dayan Under The Gun

Dayan, the main architect of the provocative Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, has long been the trusted inside man in Israel for the Jewish lobby and its controllers from the Lazard Freres banking firm. Recently Dayan has acted in concert with the President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, in an effort to wipe out the PLO as a first step in reaching an "agreement" between the Arabs and the Israelis.

Javits is currently circulating a proposal for a Saudi-Israeli deal to settle the Mideast question by relocating Palestinian refugees throughout the Arab world. The relocation plan is widely seen as an attempt to destroy

the core of the PLO and set a series of Vietnam-style "strategic hamlets" in the West Bank and elsewhere.

But Dayan's honeymoon may be nearing an end. Professor Moshe Arens, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and Begin's close ally, has publicly attacked Dayan for his "secret diplomacy"

the West Bank precluding a "genuine peace" under which Israelis could settle anywhere in historic Palestine, including areas not under Israeli sovereignty. Arens' statement is significant since the PLO's Arafat, in his ABC interview, pledged that Jews would be welcome to settle on a Palestinian-controlled West Bank. Arens also criticized Dayan for withholding information from the Knesset, contrasting Dayan's secrecy with the openness of Begin and Weizman.

Arens also revealed that Begin has established a Knesset subcommittee to maintain parliamentary control over Israel's secret service, an area that Dayan has covertly been trying to take over.

Now that his diplomacy and the peace package he brought to the UN last week are under attack, Dayan announced that he will hold extensive sessions with Henry Kissinger, whose step-by-step diplomacy is responsible for the bloody Lebanese war. The danger is that in the face of a real peace, Dayan and his backers will go for broke. *Time Magazine* this week commented that if Dayan and his Jewish Lobby cohorts are pushed too hard to negotiate with the Arabs they "might conceivably launch a last-ditch Middle East war in order to cripple their Arab enemies."

Carter On The PLO

The following are excerpts from U.S. President Carter's Sept. 29 press conference in which he discussed the Middle East question.

Q. Mr. President, there have been a lot of confusing statements from the White House...on where exactly the U.S. stands in terms of the Palestinians, and PLO participation in a Geneva Conference. Can you clarify this point?

A. I doubt it, but I would be glad to try. We're trying to act as an intermediary between Israel and each one of those Arab countries that border their own country. There are some differences among the Arab nations which we are trying to resolve...

At the same time we have a further complicating factor in that we are joint chairmen of the Geneva Conference, along with the Soviet Union, so in the call for the conference and in the negotiations preceding the format of the conference we have to deal with the Soviet Union as well.

So on top of all that, and perhaps preeminent in my own mind, is that we're not an idle observer or bystander; we're not just an intermediary or mediator. We have a vital national interest in the ultimate peace in the Middle East. It's obvious to me that there can be no Middle Eastern peace settlement without adequate Palestinian

representation...

We have no national position on exactly who would represent the Palestinians or exactly what form the Arab group would take in which the Palestinians would be represented.

Q. One moment. Does the U.S. accept the PLO as a representative of the Palestinians?

A. If the PLO should go ahead and say "We endorse UN Resolution 242; we don't think it adequately addresses the Palestinian issue because it only refers to refugees and we think we have a further interest than that," that would suit us okay. We would then begin to meet with and to work with the PLO.

I certainly don't think they're the exclusive representative of the Palestinians. Obviously there are mayors, for instance, and local officials in the West Bank area who represent Palestinians. They may or may not be members of the PLO... I think, by the way, that both the groups — the Arabs and the Israelis — have come a long way...

Q. Mr. President, what are the assurances given to the PLO in the event of accepting 242?

A. If they accept UN 242 and the right of Israel to exist, then we will begin discussions with the leaders of the PLO.

Lebanon Truce Tentative

Just two days after the southern Lebanese ceasefire, there are indications of its unraveling. Pierre Gemeyal, leader of the right-wing Christian Falange, has warned that unless the 5,000 Palestinians are not immediately removed from the south, fighting will resume.

According to the terms of the truce, the Palestinians are to withdraw from the area on the border with Israel, to be replaced by the newly reconstructed 1,500-man Lebanese army. Already all but a few Israeli troops have completely withdrawn from the battle ares. Observers in southern Lebanon report, however, that the scheduled deployment of the Lebanese army has not yet taken place, and as a result the Palestinians are not leaving.

Further complicating the delicate situation, the left wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine declared from Beirut that they will not withdraw their forces from the south, leaving open the threat of continued border tension. This could easily trigger another round of fighting in the Lebanese tinderbox.

The Soviet Union, meanwhile, has harshly condemned the Israelis for threats of invading the oilfields of the Persian Gulf. The government daily, *Izvestia*, Sept. 25 specifically criticized Dayan ally General Meir Amit, who last week called for the destruction of "Arab force," referring to the oilfields. Amit and Dayan covertly set up the 1967 war and are complicit in the latest scheme, pushed by the U.S. monetarists, to crush the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries by attacking its heart, the Persian Gulf.

Arafat: Overtures To Geneva

The following interview with Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was released Sept. 24 by ABC-TV News. According to ABC, Arafat told correspondent Barbara Walters in an interview portion released Sept. 22, that the PLO would be "satisfied" with a Palestinian state on the West Bank.

Walters: Mr. Arafat, I would like to ask you what you think of the plan of Moshe Dayan for the West Bank of the Jordan to have a complete internal autonomy and self-government but to have its military security under Israel?

Arafat: Would you accept this situation for yourself?

Walters: I'm not in your position, Mr. Arafat.

Arafat: What, we are both on one team?

Walters: Does That mean that your answer is no?

Arafat: Definitely no.

Walters: What if the West Bank were to be demilitarized or under UN supervision. Could you accept that?

Arafat: No person can start his struggle for what you are asking me to accept.

Please, you have to remember that our people are struggling 60 years. We started our struggle from 1917. Directly after the Balfour Declaration. We have been taken out of our homeland. We are now homeless, stateless refugees.

Walters: Just to make things very clear, your answer is no...that in now way could you accept the plan of Moshe Dayan.

Arafat: For me, I can't look for Moshe Dayan's plans. I have to look for my plans. My people's plans. This is what I am interested for and this is what I am struggling for.

Walters: Mr. Arafat, the United States has talked about a possible Pan Arab delegation at the Geneva conference. How would you feel about such a delegation if the Palestinian representative were not an official member of the PLO?

Arafat: Is this an official invitation from you? If you had this official invitation, I would give you my answer.

Walters: Mr. Arafat, there is a movement among certain nations at the UN to ask the Security Council to pass a

new resolution. It would support Resolution 242, but would also support measures enabling Palestinians to exercise their national rights, stating that they are entitled to a Palestinian national homeland or entity.

Arafat: National homeland and entity?

Walters: Or entity

Arafat: Or entity?

Walters: Yes.

Arafat: Yes.

Walters: If this resolution were passed, would it be acceptable to you?

Arafat: First of all, we are looking for a new resolution which must have in its consideration our rights, our rights to return back to our homeland and our right to establish an independent state. If it is so, this is what we are looking for. I hope that your government, the American government will push forward in this channel.

Walters: Let me make sure that I understand. If this resolution came to the Security Council, a resolution which supports 242 but would also support the provisions you just talked about, a national homeland, Palestinian national rights.

Arafat: Homeland, independent homeland, independent state. Yes, that is what I am looking for.

Walters: You would support this resolution?

Arafat: Definitely.

Walters: Mr. Arafat, in accepting this possible new resolution, which would also include resolution 242 in that, the PLO would implicitly accept the existence of Israel. Now President Carter has said that he would not have dialogues with you unless the PLO found some way to accept the 242 with provisions. Does this mean now that you feel you would be able to have dialogues with the President?

Arafat: But you have to remember that it is very important to look for our national rights. The main item.

Walters: Yes, I understand that.

Arafat: Which has been completely ignored through this last period of years.