

has no practical or direct element to bring to bear either on the question of the occupied territories or that of Palestinian rights and a homeland.

On the other hand, there is a problem which has been raised recently and which will be key: the problem of security in the region. Up until now, the security question has been posed in terms of military precautions: occupation of the land, availability of armaments of all sorts. If we enter into a peace situation, there will be a network of regional or international guarantees which could be substituted for this set of precautions. I am convinced that the final phase of the discussion will bear

on these guarantees, and I think that France and Europe, as industrial powers, will have or can have, an important contribution to bring to this definition and perhaps to the implementation of the guarantees. This problem of guarantees is a problem that I would like to discuss personally with Mr. Begin.

A global solution is a solution that is acceptable to the parties concerned; that is, by the countries of the Middle East. It is to be hoped that this solution will be deemed good by other interested parties; that is, by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Europe.

Assad Bows To Pressure, Maintains Opposition To Egypt-Israel Talks

Despite signs that Syria's President Assad would prefer to become directly involved in the regional peace talks in Cairo, intense internal pressures in Syria are keeping Assad in hard-line opposition to the Cairo talks.

When U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance arrived in Damascus Dec. 13, he received a cool reception, and was greeted with several press denunciations of U.S. diplomacy. Assad reportedly postponed the meeting for several hours in order to first discuss the Mideast situation with a Soviet envoy, thereby showing his displeasure with the Cairo talks.

SYRIA

Prior to Vance's trip, Assad and Foreign Minister Abdul-halib Khaddam traveled throughout the Arabian Gulf, trying to mobilize the oil-producing states against any possible deal between Egypt and Israel emerging from the talks. Expressing his most profound fear of such a deal, Assad warned that Syria would be the target of "Israeli aggression" after the talks in Cairo proceeded. Khaddam was even more blunt, affirming that Syria would go to "neither Cairo nor Geneva" to discuss peace, because such a move would only confirm the reality of Egyptian President Sadat's "capitulatory" trip to Jerusalem and ensuing regional diplomacy moves.

Several informed observers affirm, nonetheless, that Assad is in reality angling for a particular type of deal with Israel, and is therefore only tactically maneuvering to avoid the appearances of "capitulation" to Israel. These sources claim that Assad is most intent on securing an ultimate package that would include substantial control over a Lebanon which would be restored as a regional world banking center; full control over the agriculturally rich Bekaa Valley region of eastern Lebanon; and a voice in the final arrangements for the West Bank.

According to the Dec. 14 *Christian Science Monitor*, Assad and about 50 other top-level Syrian military men would prefer to follow Sadat's route to peace, but are numerically overwhelmed by the vast number of military men who belong to the Syrian Baath Party and who have been nurtured in its virtually religious view that Israel is the enemy of the Arab world. One informed Washington source reported that Assad is very wary of the actual and potential hegemony of Iraqi networks within the armed forces, and is therefore forced into an intransigent attitude on regional negotiations.

A Washington source favoring Israel went one step further, asserting that Assad has "lost control of the internal situation," as evidenced by the recent assassination wave against leading government officials belonging to his own Alawite community. The source predicted increasing instability throughout Syria, echoing the Dec. 5 prediction of Sadat, in an interview in the *London Financial Times*, that Syria and Lebanon would both experience "bloodshed" in the next days and weeks.

Lending credence to such predictions has been the recent sudden flareup of instability in Lebanon. Two border incidents involving Israel occurred in the south this week, precipitating Israeli military retaliation, and extremists in the Christian sector of Beirut this week began a protest strike. Ostensibly the strike was against press censorship, but in actuality it was against Syria's "refusal" to crack down on the Palestinians in Lebanon — a preview of future tension between the extremists and the Palestinians in the country.

Syrian Press on U.S. Diplomacy in Cairo

The following editorial excerpts from the Syrian official press indicate the intensity of opposition prevailing in ruling circles to the Cairo talks and to linked U.S. diplomatic moves.

Tishrin, "Syria Will Not Kneel," Dec. 12:

In a barrage of statements these days, U.S. officials are trying not only to support the position of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat . . . but also to cast doubt on the Syrian Arab Republic's stand so as to support the Egyptian President's allegations that those who reject his capitulatory line will ultimately join this line. . . .

Following all that has happened under U.S. sponsorship and with its participation and encouragement — in terms of torpedoing peace efforts and conspiring against the work of the Geneva conference, and against some of the parties to the conference, and preparing the way for separate solutions and for tripartite Egyptian-U.S.-Israeli

this that Vance should speak about the Geneva conference as if nothing has happened and as if Washington is guiltless in the massacre of the conference and the massacre of real peace efforts. . . .

President Assad . . . has said that Syria will not kneel . . . All of the talk about international efforts for Geneva is a kind of cover for the current conspiracy and for the regime's fall into the abyss of surrender.

The road to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is not through pushing the Sadat regime to surrender to Israel, nor through excluding the Soviet Union, the co-chairman of the Geneva conference, from the peace efforts, nor through colluding against the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization—ed.), nor through trying to

push Syria into a corner.

Tishrin, "The Difference Between Nasser and Sadat," Dec. 8:

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat has won international fame. People all over the world know him or at least have heard his name mentioned in the news. This fame reminds us of the widespread fame won by the late Jamal Nasser, with, however, one difference between the two: Nasser won international fame for his role as one of the prominent leaders of the Arab national liberation movement and for having been a leading representative of the nonaligned movement and ~~talks~~ in Cairo — people's struggle against imperialist and racist regimes. Sadat's fame results from his going against the interests of his country and the Arab nation and for his going against the forces opposed to imperialism and racism in the world. It also emanates from his capitulation before the Israeli aggressors and occupiers.

Nasser was a symbol of the people's liberation, their struggle and their hopes for progress, liberation and peace, while President Sadat has become the symbol of spinelessness and capitulation and is considered a symbol of leaders who have placed themselves at the service of imperialism and racism. He has become a substitute for the late Chiang Kai-shek, Nguyen Van Thieu, Lon Nol and Nguyen Cao Ky. . . .

Israeli Press: Begin And Dayan Disagree 'Over Everything'

The Israeli press last week had the first substantial discussion by the Israeli media of the rift between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and his renegade Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan. Begin favors an overall Middle East peace settlement, while Dayan, backed by British intelligence networks, is out to secure a partial peace with Egypt alone, a "solution" that would keep the Middle East dangerously unstable.

ISRAEL

Yedioth Aharonot, "Tensions With Dayan," Dec. 11:

There has recently been tension in the government between the Foreign Minister and several other ministers. At the same time it is believed in the coalition that these tensions are marginal and it is natural that these be felt among people with strong personalities such as the leaders of the present government.

The tensions that have recently been in evidence:

- The relations between the Foreign Minister and the

Minister of Defense. Defense Minister Ezer Weizman is very active in the political deliberations within the government and is in on the inner consultations. Dayan would prefer the issue (of peace negotiations — ed.) to revolve more around him as the person responsible for the Foreign Ministry. In view of this, there is a certain tension between Weizman and Dayan.

- The appointment of the Director General of the Prime Minister's office Dr. Eliahu Ben Elissar, to head the Israeli delegation to the Cairo conference. This has caused dissatisfaction in the Foreign Ministry. Even though Dayan agreed to the appointment, there is a feeling in the ministry that this appointment reduces the role of the Foreign Ministry in these contacts.

- The appointment of Maj. Gen. Avraham Tamir as the Israeli Defense Force representative on the delegation to the Cairo conference. Dayan did not agree with this appointment. On the other hand, it is Ezer Weizman's opinion that this appointment is the best that the IDF could make for the Israeli delegation. The Defense Minister stresses that Tamir heads the Planning Department in General Headquarters and has just headed the team that prepared the alternative military plans for the border problem on all fronts with a view toward the negotiations with the Arabs.