

The potential for such an interruption was underscored this week when an Israeli military official announced earlier last week that a major terrorist explosion had damaged the Saudi Arabian Tapline running into southern Lebanon.

On March 27, the Saudi Arabian government officially complained to the U.S. State Department that Israel has been flying "mock raids" into northern Saudi Arabia. Comment by an Israeli military official intimated that this serious provocation was a warning to the Saudis and the U.S. of Israel's response to the Administration's proposed sale of F-15 jets to Saudi Arabia.

Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also bellowed that Israel would be provoked by conclusion of the jet sale. Last week Jackson called for cancellation of the controversial deal; subsequently his committee produced a "classified" memorandum issued only to select Senators, the White House, and the *New York Times*. According to a think tank source, that report will "seriously complicate the situation in Congress" surrounding passage of the jet sales agreement. The source reported firsthand

knowledge that the classified report was leaked by a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to the *Times* in order to pressure the Administration to cancel the Saudi deal.

The classified report, according to the source, states that there are two likely results from the actual delivery (not due for two years) of U.S. F-15s to Saudi Arabia: (1) if the planes are delivered, that will invite a preemptive strike from Israel against Saudi oil fields in the event of another Mideast war; or (2) if the sale does not go through, it will prompt the Saudi government to fully nationalize Aramco. He added that failure of the sale to go through will seriously weaken the internal strength of the most "pro-American" political faction within the Saudi leadership, that is, Oil Minister Zaki Yamani, Prince Fahd, and Khalid. The shift, the source added, will go from this faction which has staked enormous internal political prestige on their American ties, to the "pro-British" faction around Abdullah, head of the Saudi Royal Guard. Abdullah has sought to raise oil prices and cut Saudi production.

—W. Engdahl

Mideast Development Chances Held Hostage To Israel's 'Masada'

American and Western European policy-makers who are concerned with stabilizing the Middle East and bringing that region under the sway of extended development programs and expanded trade are currently being held hostage to a utopian Israeli strategic outlook generally known as the "Masada" or "breakaway ally" stance. This is the view that Israel, if it perceives itself to be "abandoned" by its American ally, will launch massive preemptive strikes against its Arab neighbors and risk national suicide in a direct showdown with forces of the Warsaw Pact.

In interviews, leading U.S. strategic analysts have privately expressed grave concern about the threat that this utopian doctrine poses to the ability of the U.S. to develop a coherent Middle East policy. According to one strategist, "Israel will launch a war instantly if it perceives the U.S.-Saudi or U.S.-Arab relations to have advanced beyond a certain point that threatens the unique historical U.S.-Israel relation." Said another: "Israel is prepared to throw everything it's got at Syria, knocking that country's capacities out for a decade in one to two weeks of combat. A minority group in the Israeli military wants to do this *now*, but this viewpoint will accelerate if Israel becomes convinced that the U.S. is abandoning Israel to its fate."

Since the "breakaway" operation risks not only Israel's real abandonment by a U.S. not willing to be dragged into a showdown with the Soviets, but also Israel's actual destruction as a state—whether by losing a war or by the inevitable ostracism it would face from the entire international community — this operation is not uniformly supported by Israeli strategists, but is

rather the subject of ongoing debate. One of the supporters of the breakaway outlook is the country's current Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman — the man singly most responsible for Israel's Lebanon invasion, a military adventure that since its inception has risked provoking a much larger regional war and that has become such a messy quagmire for the Israelis that new escalations are an ongoing threat. It is Israel's actions in Lebanon that have brought the concern with "Masada" to the fore in American policy considerations.

The breakaway aspects of Israel's Lebanon adventure were advertised in the March 25-31 London *Economist*. In a feature titled "Why Begin Didn't Stop," the *Economist* analyzes why Begin decided to "send the Israeli forces hurtling onward to one of their biggest war operations instead of turning back home," after having completed a more limited foray six miles deep into Lebanese territory. Begin's *defiance* of the U.S., the *Economist* stresses, was the reason for the move: after the U.S. insisted that Israel not advance beyond six miles and instead began an immediate retreat, "the Begin government suddenly found itself confronted with ... the United States standing between it and victory. Mr. Begin, who for 30 years as opposition leader had thundered that the government was spineless and should stand up to the Americans, decided to take action ... He ordered the campaign expanded instead of stopped ... Since Israel was in the middle of a vital showdown with President Carter's administration over the whole range of Middle East peace negotiations, it must show itself tough over Lebanon. If it crumbled on that, its position on larger issues would be weakened."

Weizman And Masada

If Lebanon is the rehearsal for the final act of Israel's breakaway preemptive strike against the Syrians and other Arab states, Weizman is the perfect man to complete the job.

Underneath the suave, urbane veneer that he has developed since the November visit to Jerusalem of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Weizman has an unbroken track record of adopting extreme views with bravado and recklessly trying to impose them on Israel's strategic planners. These views add up, fundamentally, to the will to act on a strictly *localist* perception of the correlation of forces facing Israel, in which Israel has overwhelming military superiority against its neighbors. In this cowboy approach to basic questions of war and diplomacy, Weizman is cavalier about the possibilities of a local confrontation with forces of the Warsaw Pact, and has no compunctions about provoking a direct confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Weizman, then, doesn't hide his view that Israel's alliance with the U.S. is in reality a one-way street, and that he feels little pangs of regret about dragging the U.S. into war scenarios that are worse than detrimental to the American national interest.

Weizman's attitude emerged in bold relief during the period leading up to the U.S. government's 1970 Rogers Plan regional peace initiative. Prior to the offering of that initiative, Israel and Egypt were locked into a deadly "war of attrition" characterized by Egyptian forays against Israeli forward positions and massive Israeli retaliation bombing raids against Egyptian infrastructure, raids which crippled much of Egypt's vital plant and equipment. The Rogers Plan was both an attempt to put an end to this war, especially as it threatened direct military confrontation between Israel and the Soviet Union, and to bring the conflicting Middle East parties to agree on the basic principles of a region settlement.

Weizman's attitude toward the U.S. initiative itself is revealing. In *On Eagles' Wings*, Weizman's autobiographical account of the development of the Israeli Air Force, Weizman bluntly states, "The acceptance of the ceasefire appeared at the time to be tied up with the implementation of the Rogers Plan, and I was convinced that for Israel to accede to the Rogers Plan would be a disaster."

Weizman's attitude to the war of attrition itself is even more telling. According to the authors of the book *Who Rules Israel?*, Weizman, during the 1969-70 period, "particularly rejected ... fears that the Soviets would actively intervene against Israel."

By his own account, Weizman "over and over again ... told cabinet ministers and army officers: 'The war of attrition is the first battle in the campaign to retain the fruits of the (1967) Six Day War. If we don't win this battle, it will be hard to win this campaign.' When it was essential for her security," Weizman emphasized, "Israel could not refrain from taking military action solely because there were Russians in Egypt's operational echelon. Over and over I argued that if, by refrain-

Israel Will 'Go To Any Lengths' To Crack Saudi-U.S. Ties

The following is an assessment of the current Israeli perception of the growing U.S.-Saudi link given by an Israeli analyst with close ties to Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and to the U.S. Rand Corporation:

Israel's answer to this Saudi-U.S. link, under Begin's rule, is, "We're ready to go to any length to resist it." Israel will, under this view, resist even if U.S. aid is cut back. The whole ruling Likud Party is united in this view. That is, if Carter is pressuring Israel *because of the Saudis*, Israel will have the following response: "If this is your strategic premise, we're not playing the game, even if you bring Eisenhower-like pressure to bear upon us, because if the Saudis are making American policy, then in ten years their current demand that we withdraw to the pre-1967 territorial lines will become a demand that we withdraw to the 1947 United Nations partition lines, and that the Palestinians have a right to return to the pre-1967 boundaries.

If Israel assesses the basic U.S. motive to be that of allowing the Saudis to be behind everything — behind Jordan, behind Egypt, behind the U.S. policy — then Israel will raise very publicly the following question, "Why does the U.S. claim the Saudis to be moderate? If the Saudis do in fact support the PLO, then they are not moderate, and the U.S. should stop claiming the opposite. This is the way Israel will counter the Saudi game, with a very public push around this issue, forcing the Saudis and the U.S. to answer to it — and the Bert Lance affair is going to be used to the hilt in the same way.

ing from action, we accepted the Russian presence as a buffer against Israeli action, we would lead the Russians to step up their demonstrative involvement, steadily whittling down our own freedom of action."

In fact, during that crisis, Israel's Air Force *did* come into combat with Soviet pilots. According to Ze'ev Schiff, Israel's leading military correspondent and the authoritative historian of the Israeli armed forces, Israel at the time felt that the Soviets were "testing" Israel and, therefore, if Israel backed off, "Russian boldness would increase," so Israel "accepted the Soviet challenge." Schiff claims that the Soviets "sustained a decisive defeat" in the air combat with the Israeli jets and boasts, "Israel made it clear that she would not flinch from fight with Russian pilots if the latter attacked or attempted to prevent Israeli aircraft from operating in the (Suez) Canal region ... The Russians realized that if they really wanted to beat Israel they would have to bring hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the area."

Analyzing the “superiority” of the Israeli Air Force that Weizman was singly most responsible for building up, Schiff quotes a top Israeli pilot: “We are the best, even if Russian pilots come against us ... I think our character is what gives us this supremacy. It’s something connected with the history of the Jewish people ... To lose supremacy means for the nation to walk into the sea. I don’t think it will happen.”

Weizman himself stated, in *On Eagles’ Wings*, “In 1948 and 1967, and during all the difficult times up to 1970, we never budged from the concept, without which Israel’s existence would have been inconceivable, that our safety would be ensured not by parity of armament, but by the quality of the Israeli soldier; that it wasn’t technological superiority which made us stronger than our enemies, but *our great spiritual preeminence*.” (emphasis added)

In an interview with Schiff in the early 1970s, Weizman stated bluntly, “If we stand against the Russians, in equal numbers, we will overcome them.”

Not surprisingly, Weizman had been one of the more adventurous superhawks during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In *On Eagles’ Wings*, Weizman notes “the fear” during the first hours of the war that “following Egypt’s crushing defeat, the Syrians had taken on such importance in Soviet eyes that rather than see the Syrians beaten, the Russians would overcome their apprehensions and send combat forces into the Middle East. (Defense Minister) Dayan and others were much preoccupied with this fear ... This feeling did more than just reinforce our fears about Syria. It was the reason we stopped where we did, on the banks of the Suez Canal, instead of thrusting deep into Egypt ... I can say in my defence ... that ... I had contended that we ought to push onto Cairo and there dictate peace, or any settlement we found convenient ... For years we had awaited such an opportunity for settling accounts with our most bitter foes. But the chief of staff left that night (June 8, 1967 — ed.) in the certainty that the Golan Heights would remain Syrian and the settlements below would continue to suffer from Syrian viciousness.”

Weizman then exults, however, that “there is no explanation for what happened to Moshe Dayan that night ... Without consulting the chief of staff, without sending the order to the head of Northern Command through the usual channels — some even claim, without prior Cabinet agreement — Dayan did a complete turn-about and added ... Syria to the list of routed states.”

Weizman, Dayan, and the Cowboy Clique

The Weizman-Dayan interaction is, more generally, an important element in the propagation of the Masada-breakaway mentality. Dayan, who is Weizman’s brother-in-law, is described in Weizman’s autobiography: “Anyone who says he isn’t a brave man, doesn’t know Moshe Dayan.” After the 1967 war, Weizman gloats, “Moshe Dayan’s name was on everyone’s lips, a modern Ghengis Khan enjoying absolute veneration.”

This revealing statement identifies an absolutely fundamental aspect of Weizman’s persona, his cowboy-bravado profile, which he freely flaunts in his writings. Linked to an ideological flair for Zionist expansionism, Weizman has been the traditional “bête noire” of the three decades of Israeli history.

For him, the 1967 war represented the “liberation of the land of Israel,” the emergence of “Greater Israel” (the title of one of the chapters of *On Eagles’ Wings*). “The liberation of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria,” he exults, “was more than just (a dazzling victory) — far more. For me it meant returning home, to my own country, to places whose very names filled me with excitement and made my heart tremble.”

These views, he boasts, had often, prior to 1967, branded him within Israel as an “historical hysteric, without any rational foundation.” Analyzing why he was bypassed for the Chief of Staff appointment in the 1960s by the Labour Party leadership, he stresses, “I didn’t conceal my views from anyone. Everyone knew that ... my roots weren’t in the dominant Labour movement. The loyal party stalwarts understood that it was an unusual animal they had in this Weizman. To them I was a wild man, with horrifying opinions: a senior commander who claimed that we have the right to Hebron and Nablus (both in the Arab-inhabited West Bank — ed.) and all of Jerusalem, and that we must endeavor to implement that right by force of arms, if there is no other alternative ... They viewed me as a ‘national desperado’ who preached that the best pilot in the world isn’t a man who knows how to squeeze the right button and send off his missile at the right moment, but must believe in the justice of his deeds in defence of the rights of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.”

Weizman and the British

In developing these traits, Weizman has played an interesting counterpoint with the former British occupiers of colonial Palestine. While joining the anti-British Irgun militias in the 1940s, Weizman preserved several strong Anglophile tendencies. Earlier, at age 15, he had met and admired top British intelligence officer Orde Wingate, who stayed at the Weizman family home in Haifa. By the early 1950s, after having spent several years in the Royal Air Force during World War II, Weizman was one of the first two Israelis to be trained in a British Staff College.

Needless to say, when Israel joined Britain in the 1956 Suez invasion of Egypt, Weizman enthusiastically supported the operation — except for his disagreement with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion over the use of French jets to carry out raids into Egyptian territory. Weizman wanted the Israeli Air Force to do the job.

—Mark Burdman

Support For Israel Wanes In U.S.

Support in the U.S. for Israel is waning in the wake of the invasion of Lebanon. Attacks on Israel have been seen in the press and in the Congress in the last week. Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.) introduced a resolution in the Senate supporting the UN resolution for an immediate withdrawal from Lebanon. In his motivating statement Abourezk detailed the “barbarism” of the Israeli invasion. The following excerpts are taken from the Congressional Record of March 21: