

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

Behind Dayan's outrageous demand

Paralysis of Israel's Labour Party, and an opening for an 'emergency' government, are part of his ploy.

As Israel moves toward its national elections June 30, former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan has issued a political ultimatum that could potentially throw the country into a dangerous institutional crisis in the months ahead.

Dayan has suddenly begun insisting that he be designated by Labour Party prime ministerial candidate Shimon Peres as the man who will be responsible for all negotiations with the Arab states and for daily administration of the occupied West Bank if, as expected, Labour triumphs in the June elections. Dayan has also demanded that Labour shelve its support for territorial compromise on the West Bank and instead give him the authority to unilaterally declare "autonomy" for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza as enunciated by the Egypt-Israel Camp David accords.

Taken literally, Dayan's demand is so outrageous that it cannot be regarded as serious in and of itself, and not only because Dayan is suffering from terminal cancer. Were Peres to agree to the demand, he would trigger howls of protest from Labour's activists, who regard Dayan as a renegade for having broken from Labour to join the Likud government of Menachem Begin in 1977. To this day, Dayan is not even a member of Labour!

This anti-Dayan mood in Labour underscores the fact that Day-

an is much more popular among American Jews and among the Anglo-American press corps than he is among Israel's citizens.

Furthermore, were Peres to agree to Dayan's ultimatum, he would be agreeing to establish a co-premiership set up in Israel, in violation of all the norms and regulations of Israel's present governmental system.

If it can be concluded, then, that Dayan's demand is hardly serious by itself, it must also be pointed out that Dayan is motivated by more than what Israelis call *chutzpah* (or what Americans would call "gall"). The actual intent behind Dayan's ultimatum ploy is to precipitate a constitutional crisis, thereby fulfilling his longstanding goal of replacing Israel's democratic system with the strongman rule of an "emergency government" composed of generals and military intelligence professionals.

Such a system could be Dayan's last will and testament for Israel.

The way this crisis would unfold is the following.

According to highly placed sources, Dayan has threatened to form a new party if Peres does not meet his ultimatum. This party, either an entirely independent "National Emergency List" or a coalition in alliance with the Rafi grouping of recently resigned Finance Minister Yigal Hurvitz, would have as its only *raison d'être* the siphon-

ing off of 10 to 15 seats in Israel's Knesset from Labour.

This would be enough to deprive Labour of its majority, and possibly to create a complete vacuum of power in Israel.

Then, Dayan would be in the power-broker position to either dictate policy terms to Labour, join in an alliance with the unpopular Likud of Begin, or force into being some kind of anticonstitutional solution to the impasse.

The vast majority of the Israeli population, which recalls with bitterness the fact that Begin was propelled to power because Labour was undercut in 1977 by the synthetic Democratic Movement for Change group, which has no constituency among Israeli citizens, is antagonistic to Dayan's efforts.

He is counting on enough bank-rolling from Anglo-American financiers abroad and on internal support from an entrenched British-connected faction of military and intelligence "old boys" to make his operation a success.

What many Israelis think of Dayan's antics was indicated in a commentary in the Feb. 13 *Jerusalem Post*, entitled "Cynicism in the Supermarket."

"While we have not yet reached the stage of having assorted banjo players, pop tunesters and basketball heroes run for political office," *Post* columnist Yosef Goell commented, "the election campaign for the Tenth Knesset is already marked by the appearance of a candidate whose main purpose is to play the role of spoiler."

Stressing Dayan's "history of inconstancy," Goell labeled Dayan's latest moves against the Labour Party "an example of political cynicism at its worst."