

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

The partition of Jordan

Begin and Assad are determined to share the spoils. Syria is at odds with all the Arab states except Libya.

Israel's April 21 bombing raid into Lebanon was the start of a joint Israeli-Syrian scheme to partition both Lebanon and King Hussein's Jordan. That is not a scenario dreamed up by some Palestinian radical or Soviet propagandist; rather, it is the testimony of a Zionist source intimate with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

"The ceasefire in Lebanon is over," said the source, gloating at Washington's failure to respond. "And it will not be re-negotiated, at least not by Philip Habib. The next step will be Jordan. I would give King Hussein one year, at most."

The source admitted that Israel and Syria have limited common interests in that direction. "Syria will help us with Jordan. There is a certain usefulness to us in the Syrian pressure on Jordan, and I think it is fair to say that we will share the spoils, so to speak, with the Syrians. Probably, Jordan will be partitioned along the Upper Yarmuk River, which will form a new Syrian-Israeli boundary."

In fact, as other evidence shows, Syria and Israel have formed what amounts to a virtual joint command. According to Middle East intelligence sources, Syria has concentrated up to 50,000 troops on the Iraqi border, and is actively considering the opening of a second front against Iraq, in alliance with Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran. Already, Syrian jets have repeatedly violated Iraqi air space.

"A Syrian move against Iraq would not only be an attempt to prevent Iraq from concentrating on its war with Iran," said an Arab strategist. "It would also spread to an attack against Jordan, and it would help to implement the 'Sharon plan.'"

Last year, Ariel Sharon declared that he would support the overthrow of King Hussein of Jordan and the establishment of a "Palestinian state" in Amman. Asked about that statement in mid-April, Sharon refused to repudiate it, telling Israel's *Maariv* newspaper that the "only foreigners in Jordan are the members of the Hashemite royal family."

Despite its posture as a radical Arab nationalist state, Assad has made Syria into a virtual outlaw state among the Arabs, committing Syrian intelligence to a campaign of blackmail and terrorism against almost every other Arab state except Libya, its close ally.

The April 22 car bombing that hit the Paris offices of *Al-Watan al-Arabi*, an independent Arab weekly not friendly to Syria, was proven to have been carried out by the Syrian military intelligence center in Paris, under the command of Col. Rifaat al-Assad, the president's gangster brother. France expelled the Syrian defense attaché and recalled its ambassador from Damascus.

And by its mid-April break in diplomatic relations with Iraq and the suspension of the Iraqi oil ex-

ports through the Syrian pipeline, Syria has confronted virtually the entire Arab world, which backs Iraq.

Intelligence sources report that Syria's secret service has warned Kuwait, Iraq's neighbor and a major oil producer, that Syria will take action against the Kuwaitis—including destabilization—if Kuwait continues to oppose the Syrian policies in Lebanon and the Gulf. Not long ago, Kuwait suspended payments to Syria for its "peacekeeping" forces in Lebanon.

Now, in retaliation, Syria is threatening Kuwait with using radical Palestinians in Kuwait against the sheikdom, including terrorists, to blackmail its government.

But Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the four other members of the so-called Gulf Cooperation Council met in late April to discuss the Persian Gulf war, and opposed Syria's break with Iraq. According to reports from Arab sources, the GCC decided to suspend financial aid to the Syrians, running at \$1.8 billion per year, unless Syria reversed its position on Iraq (see article, page 38). Iraqi diplomats had crisscrossed the Gulf demanding pressure on Syria.

The Assad family has reportedly built up an enormous financial nest-egg in Swiss banks as a result of drug-smuggling activities operated jointly with Meyer Lansky's mob and the Israeli Mafia. In Cyprus, Malta, Sicily, and other spots in the Mediterranean, Israeli and Syrian intelligence officers met frequently to coordinate affairs.

In Israel, the chief contact for the Syrians is Gen. Rehavam Zeevi, said to be the chief of the Israeli underworld, and Gen. Ariel Sharon, Israel's would-be strongman.