

## Reagan faces a war on two Mideast fronts

by Robert Dreyfuss, Middle East Editor

President Reagan and Secretary of State George P. Shultz are facing the eruption of a two-front war in the Middle East, whose outbreak is the product of former Secretary of State Alexander Haig's outright collaboration with America's enemies in the region. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Iranian move into Iraq might appear to be two distinct conflicts, but they are in fact a single war spanning the entire region. In this conflict, the Begin-Sharon government in Israel, Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, and the radical Arab rejection front based in Damascus—with tentative support from the Kremlin and the full support of the British intelligence service—have launched an all-out move to destroy U.S. influence in the Middle East.

To the extent that President Reagan can establish cooperation with Pope John Paul II's Vatican, with the moderate Arab forces in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and with Israeli opponents of the fascist Begin-Sharon clique, then it is possible to secure the American national interest in the region. If this is done, the Soviet Union will have little choice but to cooperate.

But with each step by the Reagan administration in that direction, the forces deployed by Sharon, the Muslim Brotherhood secret society, and the Rejection Front have escalated their anti-American campaign.

That campaign is sponsored by London and by the Western European oligarchy, who have two objectives: first, to eliminate the United States as a major force in the Middle East and replace America as the chief financial power and arms salesman in the area; and second, to make a deal with Moscow's heir apparent Yuri Andropov and the H. A. R. "Kim" Philby faction to establish

a "New Yalta" in the Middle East. The destabilization of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia—America's chief ally in the area—is the prime objective of this operation.

Given this, no competent observer doubts the link between Sharon's genocide in Lebanon and the monstrous Iran human-wave attacks against Iraq, especially in light of General Sharon's public boast about sending Israeli arms to Khomeini's hordes. New conflicts are being spawned in the Yemens, the Horn of Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean to complicate the problem.

### The Vatican solution

Although the Israeli ceasefire imposed within minutes of Haig's ouster on June 25 has held as of deadline—except for periodic atrocities by Israel's artillery—the Reagan administration is still embroiled in a complex diplomatic effort to resolve the crisis. Beyond the crisis-management immediately linked to the siege of Beirut, it is apparent that the administration's goal is to create the basis for a stable and prosperous rebuilt Lebanon and, more broadly, to open a dialogue with the PLO's moderate wing.

In this effort, the most vital ally of the United States is the Vatican. Pope John Paul II has mobilized the Church to prevent the disintegration of the Lebanese state into "ministates" run by puppet-like warlords, and, in coordination with President Reagan and Lebanese leader Raymond Edde, has proposed to stop the fighting, and restore order to Lebanon.

In a July 11 statement, *EIR* founding editor Lyndon H. LaRouche urged the superpowers to immediately support the Vatican formula for Lebanon. "The Vatican is correct in identifying the current Ariel Sharon-led

invasion of Lebanon as part of a years-long plan to do away with the sovereign state of Lebanon and set up a small Christian state allied with Israel, led by the Falangist leader Bashir Gemayel. Israel would then annex what is now southern Lebanon," said LaRouche.

"I am certain that my trusted acquaintance Raymond Edde will be capable of undertaking the responsibilities that are implied," LaRouche added, urging that Rome's efforts be supported "before the genocide being carried out by Israel under its Nazi Defense Minister Sharon becomes the trigger for World War III."

The Reagan administration is moving toward opening relations with the PLO in the Beirut negotiations. Shultz, in confirmation hearings on July 13, placed great emphasis on a solution for the Palestinians and their "legitimate rights." His statements sharply contrasted with Haig's babbling about "strategic consensus."

According to Arab sources, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Syria will present a letter from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to Reagan in a scheduled July 20 meeting, endorsing the eight-point peace plan of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, which implicitly recognizes Israel's right to exist. In the delegation—it is rumored—Khaled Hassan of the PLO will be present as an adviser.

Issam Sartawi of the moderate Palestinian wing indicated the PLO position in a July 14 speech in Paris by saying that "formally and officially," on behalf of the PLO and the Palestine National Council, he offered to exchange reciprocal recognition of Israel. He also asked Washington to talk directly with the PLO. In Cairo, top PLO diplomats Ahmed Dajani and Said Kamal offered to establish a government-in-exile based in Egypt, provided that it would win U.S. recognition. Many other PLO officials made similar remarks, including endorsements of Shultz's remarks, and the PLO official spokesman Mahmoud Labadi, speaking of efforts to resist the Israeli siege of Beirut, said bluntly, "The Israeli people are now our best ally."

### **Sharon's Iranian flank**

But no sooner was General Sharon's blitzkrieg halted by American ultimatum than Israel assisted the Iranian regime in opening its long-awaited offensive in the war with Iraq.

Khomeini's human-wave assaults into the Arab Gulf—backed by Israeli arms and intelligence and the support of Moscow's Arab radical allies—were aimed at upsetting the alliance between Iraq, the Gulf states, and Egypt in support of the PLO.

The message to Saudi Arabia from Sharon is simple: unless you desist from efforts to effect an American-PLO rapprochement, Israel and Iran will destroy you. The first target in the attack on Saudi Arabia may be

Jordan, the chief supply line to Iraq and the gateway to the Gulf. Repeatedly in the recent past Sharon has pledged to overthrow King Hussein's monarchy and, according to intelligence sources, he has reached a tactical accord with Syria's President Hafez Assad toward that end. Now, by moving against Jordan, Sharon would also squeeze Iraq in a pincer. Syria, long allied to Iran, is already supporting its lunatic Teheran friends.

In its first response to the July 14 Iranian attack on Iraq, the Reagan administration renewed its pledges of neutrality in public, while privately letting it be known that it leans toward Iraq's position. Clement Zablocki, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, urged July 15 that American arms be shipped to Iraq via the Gulf states. Zablocki's proposal may be a trial balloon for the administration. An associate of Secretary of State George Shultz told *EIR* that Shultz intends to eliminate from the Department of State those remaining among of "the Kissinger-Haig geopoliticians who supported Iran over Iraq."

Iraq dealt Iran a serious setback in its invasion, according to battle reports from the Gulf, killing thousands of Iranian soldiers—most of whom are drawn from the ranks of the Revolutionary Guard and units of Iraqi Shiite exiles—and repelling the invaders. Provided that Iraq can overcome the command weaknesses that led to the disastrous setbacks in the war earlier this year, Iraqi forces have the capability of blocking Iran's intended advance. But Iran's goals include the establishment of an "Islamic Republic of Basra" in southern Iraq, and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's nationalist, pro-development regime.

### **Where the Soviets stand**

So far, the Soviet Union has played both sides of the Middle East crisis. While making appeals to Arab moderates by condemning "U.S.-Israeli collusion," the Soviets have also mobilized the radical and communist forces in the Arab world for an Alamo-like last stand against U.S. efforts to strike a deal with the PLO.

For instance, the U.S.S.R.'s top specialists in destabilization—Boris Ponomarev of the Communist Party's International Department and Yuri Andropov, ex-KGB chief—met with Khaled Bagdash of the Syrian Communist Party on July 16, following a meeting of eight Arab communist parties held early in July. With them, George Habash's radical Palestinians began to prepare for a break with the moderate PLO Arafat wing, presumably with the support of the radical Arab front of Syria and Libya with Khomeini's Iran.

An Israeli official, alarmed about progress toward a U.S.-PLO dialogue, expressed satisfaction that Moscow's Arab allies would prevent the threat to Israel represented by American moves to talk to the Palestinians.