

## Dominoes are toppled in the Middle East

by Muriel Mirak and Mark Burdman

While American political life becomes increasingly dominated by election-year politics, and contrived public opinion polls threaten to command greater executive attention than matters of strategic concern affecting the fates of entire nations, the United States government is witnessing the annihilation of its influence over the Middle East. Through the combined efforts of Henry A. Kissinger's strong-arm tactics and front-running Democratic candidates' appeasement policies to the new Soviet leadership, Middle Eastern nations are toppling like dominoes under massive Soviet pressure, in what must be characterized as the most humiliating strategic backdown in postwar history.

The first domino to fall is the nation of Lebanon, whose economy and population have been decimated through years of civil war ignited in 1975 by Henry A. Kissinger. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Shafiq Wazzan earlier this month, the Reagan administration announced its intention to withdraw its ground forces to battleships off the Lebanese coast, and rendered the unexpected withdrawal official on Feb. 16, when the President put his name on an executive order to bring the troops back home. Reagan's move, prompted by the congressional lobbying organized by Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, effectively pulled the rug out from under the fragile Amin Gemayel regime and opened the way for opposition Druze and Shi'ite militias to escalate their military push against the capital. The Soviets and their proxy forces moved in for the kill.

Militarily, the week following the U.S.-announced pull-out saw the successful drive of the Druze militias to join their allies in the Lebanese Shi'ite Al Amal militias in Beirut

and march southward against positions held by the Lebanese Army. Faced by a Soviet-armed Shi'ite-Druze offensive, the weakened Lebanese forces splintered, up to half defecting to the opposition while the rest retreated behind Israeli lines.

In Washington, while official government spokesmen reiterated ritual promises to maintain American military presence as long as necessary, the Marines continued boarding ships. Shelling from offshore, the United States kept up the posture of some engagement, but, in the absence of a credible ground force commitment, could do nothing to halt the onslaught of the Muslim offensive. Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, duly elected public officials hung their heads in feigned regret, mumbling that the current rout brought back memories of the 1979 fall of the Shah of Iran.

### The politics of appeasement

There is no military rationale for the backdown of U.S. Marines to a coalition of tribal groups (no matter how well armed by the U.S.S.R.) like those led by Druze Walid Jumblatt or the Al Amal Shi'ites. If Reagan had heeded the policy initiatives proposed more than a year ago by Democratic presidential contender Lyndon LaRouche to send a force of 100,000 Marines to Lebanon, Lebanon might have had hopes today of maintaining its national integrity. As the situation stands, the nation is fast being chopped up into a federation of tribal units or cantons, as one Israeli analyst put it, "an Israeli section, a Druze section in the Chouf mountain regions, the Syrian areas in the north and east, and something we are calling 'Beirut, D.C.' like Washington, D.C."

The only rationale behind the debacle is that of appease-

ment. Gemayel, faced with a government crisis and an American pullback, is fighting for his survival, offering up to the mad dogs in the Syrian-backed opposition camp what morsels remain to him. First, Druze leader Jumblatt had pressured Gemayel to tear up the May 17 agreement with Israel regarding foreign troop withdrawals, but, when Gemayel acquiesced, Jumblatt asked for the Lebanese president's head. "Gemayel may be trying to save his neck," said the Socialist International leader. "There will be no mercy for him. He must be tried, he and the other officers for all the crimes they have committed." Jumblatt's hardline position remains that Gemayel must either resign, to be tried, or "commit suicide."

In further attempts to appease the Hitler-worshipper Jumblatt, the Lebanese President undersigned an eight-point program prepared for him by Saudi intermediaries. The program calls for canceling the May 17 accords with Israel, establishing a ceasefire, progressive withdrawal of all foreign troops, security arrangements for Lebanon, new Geneva talks, Lebanese structural reforms (allowing greater Muslim political control), security for southern Lebanon, and the replacement of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force by a United Nations contingent. In short, Gemayel agreed to turn over his nation to the Soviet Union, its Syrian and Druze allies, and certain forces within Israel. But still the Syrians rejected the eight-point program.

What Gemayel may be left with, as one political analyst put it, is "one square meter of Beirut." More realistically speaking, he will probably be swept out entirely, once he has overseen the creation of the balkanized federation, and be replaced by one of Jumblatt's candidates for presidency, Suleiman Franjeh or Raymond Edde. As we go to press, Gemayel has left the presidential palace and is widely thought to be preparing to flee the country.

Relations between the nascent Lebanese cantons and the Soviets are expected to duplicate those binding the U.S.S.R. and Syria.

### **Saudi Arabia, Israel next?**

The second domino slated to fall in the appeasement game is Saudi Arabia. Pressured by the raging Gulf war on the one side, and the Soviet push in Lebanon on the other, the Saudis, in the absence of a credible American policy, are eager to mediate. Talk has been rife of impending diplomatic relations between the Saudi government and Moscow.

Next comes Israel. Capitalizing on the U.S. troop withdrawal, which Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir claims he was previously not informed of, the adventurist Kissingerian faction led by Minister without Portfolio Ariel Sharon is moving to grab all it can as Lebanon is carved into chunks. Shamir himself announced that, due to the abrogation of the May 17 agreement, Israel would have to guarantee its own security in Southern Lebanon, which translates into a declaration of permanent occupation leading to annexation of the area. Following the Druze-Shi'ite push south, the Israelis

even ventured deep into the north, pushing beyond the Awali River toward the city of Damur.

But what about the Soviets? one is prompted to ask. On the one hand, the new Soviet party chief Konstantin Chernenko reportedly issued a warning to Shamir, through the Israeli Communist Party delegation in Moscow, to the effect that were Israeli to engage in further military actions on Lebanese soil, the U.S.S.R. would not stand idly by. But on the other hand, Moscow is making a deal with Tel Aviv, behind the threats. As one well-informed journalistic source in Israel revealed, Shamir has been fooled into believing that Chernenko is an amiable interlocutor who would be willing to allow emigration of many of the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews clamoring to leave for Israel.

With the internal economic crisis exploding, the Israelis are being urged to look to the U.S.S.R., as a source of increased population, to compensate for the flow of emigration out of the troubled country. According to well-informed sources, Shamir has asked Jewish leaders in Europe and the United States to "cool" their hostile attitudes toward the Soviet Union, in order to allow an agreement on Soviet Jewry to be negotiated through the good graces of Edgar Bronfman of the American Jewish Congress. The prime minister seemed to confirm these rumors when he announced his desire both to bring the Soviets into the Middle East negotiations and his intention to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow.

### **The new Stalin**

The illusion under which the growing ranks of appeasers in the Middle East, Europe, and Washington are suffering is the media's lie that the new Soviet leader Chernenko is a peace-loving moderate, bent on resurrecting détente. The truth of the matter is that the man raised to the summit of Soviet power after Andropov's demise is a butcher, an anti-Semite, and a warmonger.

Biographical information published in Europe shows Chernenko as the head of the notorious Stalinist machines which carried out the purges. Chernenko, in addition, is the man behind the recent spate of anti-Semitic hate literature by Lev Korneyev, that has inundated the Soviet press over the past months (see *EIR*, Feb. 14).

More fundamentally, as overall Soviet policy has underlined emphatically in the Middle East, Chernenko is but a figurehead for the Soviet military junta which has been in power at least since last August. That military junta is committed to forcing Reagan to a strategic confrontation during the current year. The Middle East is but one confrontation hotspot on the map of Moscow's strategists.

That is the nature of the beast which fools think they can appease.

### **The European appeasement faction**

In Europe, which is already under the threat of an imminent Soviet surgical strike, the crowd of appeasers working

under NATO Secretary-General-elect Peter Carrington and his business partner Henry Kissinger is stepping up efforts to deal with Moscow. First Maggie Thatcher, once dubbed the Iron Lady, found her way to Hungary, then to Moscow, and declared that life behind the Iron Curtain was not so distasteful after all. On her return from Andropov's funeral she led the pack in calling for improving relations between Europe and Moscow. Close on her heels were West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl, French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, and his Italian counterpart Giulio Andreotti.

While all these European leaders have swallowed the line that Moscow is now ready to pick up nuclear arms-control talks, it is specifically around the U.S. debacle in the Middle East that they have issued calls for an "independent European policy." It was the French government which proposed to the U.N. Security Council that the currently deployed multinational forces be replaced in Lebanon by a U.N. contingent, despite the fact that the Soviet conditions laid down for such a shift were tantamount to total capitulation. The Soviets demanded, in fact, that the United States withdraw completely, moving its naval forces out of shooting range, and that it vow never to interfere further with internal Lebanese affairs! In short, what the Soviets have brought to the bargaining table is a stacked deck of cards, in a game where the winner takes all.

### **The rationale of peace**

In the middle of the Lebanese crisis, Egyptian President Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein traveled to Washington for a series of talks with President Reagan. What Mubarak presented the U.S. administration was a peace package which, if acted on, could open the way for global peace in the area (see article, page 34). Emphasizing in his comments to the press that the Lebanese situation could not be adequately dealt with until the "basic problem" of the Palestinian question were resolved, the Egyptian President urged Reagan to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Through the painstaking diplomatic efforts of the Egyptians, Yasser Arafat, after his release from Tripoli in December, conferred with Cairo and, according to Mubarak's comments, modified its hard-line position on Israel. Mubarak stated his conviction that the PLO would drop its commitment to destroy Israel, thus laying the basis for mutual recognition of the two parties. The presence of King Hussein in the talks at the same time signaled the fact that Mubarak had previously arranged for the PLO to participate in peace talks alongside the Jordanians.

What Mubarak offered Reagan was essentially a bid to revive the Reagan Plan in a modified form allowing for PLO recognition.

But the administration did not pick up on the offer. Instead, the pullout was given official sanction, Israel cried "treason" at both Reagan and Mubarak, and the dominoes began to fall.

## **Egypt's Mubarak tries**

by Linda de Hoyos

The Reagan administration's reported dispatching of Henry Kissinger to the Middle East on Feb. 16 for negotiations between Syria and Israel on the Lebanon crisis does not bode well for the administration's response to the offer brought to Washington Feb. 14 by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan. Mubarak came with a proposal that could give the United States a way out of the impasse in Lebanon. Instead of focusing exclusively on the Lebanese disaster, the Egyptian president stated, the United States must bring its power to bear to solve the Palestinian question, which, he indicated is the root cause of the Lebanon crisis.

Mubarak's proposal for negotiating the Palestinian issue is based on a July 1982 French initiative which calls for the "mutual and simultaneous" recognition of the PLO and Israel. Mubarak also called for direct negotiations between the Palestinian leadership organization and the United States.

Mubarak is reported to have told Reagan that the United States' response to this initiative will determine whether there is any hope for the moderate Arab countries to withstand the Soviet-sponsored fundamentalist offensive led by Syria, Libya, and Iran.

Mubarak also cautioned that the success of a comprehensive approach to Mideast peacemaking will depend on "Israel as a whole," and the willingness of Washington to break with the 10-year legacy of Kissingerian crisis management. The response from Israel is not encouraging. Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens issued the strongest denunciation of Egypt since the 1979 Camp David Treaty, including an implicit threat to reoccupy the Sinai. Speaking before the Conference of Major American Jewish Organizations on Feb. 16, Arens declared that "Sinai has been turned over to the Egyptians, but whether there is commitment in Cairo for long-term, stable, peaceful relations between the two countries we're not quite sure. . . . Hearing some of things being said by President Mubarak in the last days, as defense minister, I've got something to worry about. I can't discount the large build-up on the southern border."

"We do not consider Arafat a moderate," was the tack taken by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. The presence of Henry Kissinger in the region can only contribute to the intransigence coming from Jerusalem.

*Excerpts from the interview conducted with President Mubarak in the Washington Post Feb. 15:*