

Middle East Report by M. Mizrahi

The new Middle East

The "New Yalta" deal is reaching a culmination point, but both Israel and Russia have bitten off more than they can chew.

By the end of October, full diplomatic relations between Israel and Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia have all but been established. After a series of secret meetings between Israeli and Soviet officials, including one between Gorbachov and Perez in Paris, Moscow announced that it intends to do likewise, not later than next February, when the 27th Party Congress of the Communist Party meets to crown Gorbachov, now dubbed Czar Mikhail V. Prior to that, Moscow is preparing to exchange "interest sections" with Israel, large enough at least to handle the practicalities of airlifting an estimated 400,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel.

Reports from Moscow and Jerusalem state that most major Arab governments, including Egypt and Jordan, have been strongly recommending to Moscow to expedite her mutual recognition with Israel so that peace negotiations under Soviet sponsorship may begin at the earliest point. From the American side, Undersecretary of State Richard Murphy, speaking for George Shultz, informed the U.S. House of Representatives that the United States not only does not object to this emerging scheme, but, in fact, has strongly encouraged both Israel and Moscow to expedite the process. Also, Mr. Edgar Bronfman of the World Jewish Congress has been maintaining a negotiating track between the Soviet and the Israeli governments which runs parallel to that cultivated by Dr. Armand Hammer.

There appears to be a certain competition between the two millionaires as to who will control the concessions of the lucrative business of transporting and settling over half a million human beings. Various Israeli ministries and political interests are also vying for the spoils, thus giving the appearance of yet another typical Israeli political brawl.

The sum and substance of the situation is that the United States is already waving goodbye to the Middle East, and attempting to do so as painlessly as possible.

Israel's leading politicians have for a long time schemed to transform their feisty little nation into the modern Venice, the broker of all power relations in the Mediterranean world. Their scheme involves a continuation of their present "creeping annexationist" policy; fomenting the destabilization and breakup of neighboring Arab states; the cultivation of sacerdotal and ethnic minority movements; the maintenance of overwhelming military supremacy over all of Western Asia and North and Central Africa; the skillful manipulation of the intelligence and political establishments of major Western countries. They needed, most of all, two essential ingredients in order to carry out this "New Venice" scheme: manpower to break out of their demographic straits and financial resources to proceed with their long-term weapons buildup, associated with what is dubbed the Lavie Project.

Russia appears now to be ready to

supply the manpower. The United States Senate is preparing to approve a \$14.5 billion package to build Israel into a first-rate military superpower for the 21st century.

The U.S. announcement on Nov. 1 that it will not be able to respond to Turkey's request for increased military and economic aid, has set into motion a train of events which is more likely than not to transfer control of the Turkish Straits to the Russian Black Sea Fleet by 1988. Should this occur, the entire Mediterranean Sea, virtually instantly, becomes a "Russian lake," a prospect not ignored by the clever Israeli strategists in Jerusalem.

From the perspective of the interests of Arab nations and governments, the arrangement which is now emerging contains the seeds of mortal danger. Many Arabs, including Yasser Arafat, warned against such a "New Yalta" in recent months. The American policy of antagonizing Tunisia and Egypt has made it impossible for Arabs to effectively counter these Russian encroachments, and they have therefore opted to batten down the hatches and try to survive the emerging "new era" of Russian dominion. They are, however, about to navigate uncharted waters. No one, not even the most adventurous of the Israeli leaders, knows how they will find themselves acting in the new Middle East now emerging.

The waters are uncharted for the Russians as well. No doubt, Moscow would not be likely to display too many qualms at seeing Israel chopping up and fragmenting those neighboring Arab states still surviving. A nuclear-potent Israel committed to broker Soviet power projection for its own designs will be more than an annoying thorn on the side of Great Russian imperial planning. Both Israel and Russia are now poised to bite more than they can chew: namely each other.