

Palestinians and Lebanese get knife

by Joseph Brewda

One of the least known features of the Bush administration's military adventure in the Middle East is that it is associated with a new effort to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization, and a related effort to finish off the embattled Lebanese President, Gen. Michel Aoun. The destruction of the PLO and the elimination of Aoun have been long-term objectives of Syria and Israel, two of the most important U.S. allies in the region.

According to information from Lebanon received on Sept. 6, Syrian army forces in Lebanon have now encircled the East Beirut stronghold of Aoun, and are preparing a full-scale assault across the so-called Green Line which divides the Christian section from the Syrian-dominated Muslim section of that divided, civil war-torn city. The Syrians are reportedly preparing a renewed offensive which, if not checked, will probably lead to the forced evacuation of Aoun's forces by the end of the year. The elimination of Aoun will remove the last obstacle to Syrian annexation of Lebanon, and will complete the destruction of its Christian community. The annihilation of the PLO military units in Sidon is another Syrian and Israeli target.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Damascus, Syria on Sept. 12 to give the final go-ahead for the Syrian assault. Within days of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly arrived in Damascus to solicit Syrian assistance for a U.S. plan to topple Saddam Hussein. U.S. backing for a renewed operation against Aoun was one of the conditions demanded by the Syrians for that assistance.

Henry Kissinger's plan of destruction

The destruction of Lebanon began in 1975, when Secretary of State and British agent-of-influence Henry A. Kissinger triggered the Lebanese civil war as a part of a larger scheme to divide up that nation between a "Greater Syria" and a "Greater Israel." The de facto recognition of Syrian sovereignty over Lebanon, following Syria's invasion in 1976, has been a central policy of successive U.S. administrations ever since. That is why the United States has been bitterly opposed to Aoun's effort, beginning in March 1989, to drive the occupying Syrian armies out of his nation, and

reassert Lebanese sovereignty.

It is less well known that Aoun's main military supplier in the region has been the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein. Iraq has also been a primary opponent of the "Taif agreements" sponsored by the United States and bankrolled by Saudi Arabia, whereby the Aoun government would be replaced by the Syrian puppet regime of Elias Hrawi. Iraqi support for Aoun has been one motive for Bush's hostility toward Saddam Hussein. Now that Iraq's support for Aoun has been cut by the U.S. occupation of the Persian Gulf, little stands in the way of a "final solution" for Aoun.

Killing off the Palestinians

Meanwhile, the PLO, and the Palestinians generally, are slated to be among the worst losers in the U.S. adventure. PLO leader Yasser Arafat's continuing alliance with Saddam Hussein against Anglo-American imperialism in the region has increased the desire by the Bush administration to get rid of him.

Part of this operation against the Palestinians and the PLO is simply genocide. There are now 350,000 Palestinians in Kuwait and 150,000 in Iraq facing starvation because of the U.S. siege. But that is not all. Under the pretext that the PLO has aligned itself with Iraq, all of the Gulf's sheiks and potentates have ordered the immediate firing of the large Palestinian work force in their nations for "security reasons." This group includes 175,000 Palestinians in Saudi Arabia, 120,000 in the United Arab Emirates, 55,000 in Bahrain, 65,000 in Qatar, and 70,000 in Oman. They will all rapidly become beggars or refugees.

The 2.5 million Palestinians living in Jordan depend heavily upon work in the Gulf states, as well as on trade with Iraq. Hence, those in Jordan, too, are facing starvation. The 2 million Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories have considerable dependence on remittances from those of their relatives working in the Gulf. Egypt is now turning away all Palestinians from air, ground, and seaports even though they have Egyptian travel documents.

Moreover, the Arab financial fund for Palestinians dried up suddenly with the Kuwait crisis. Saudi Arabia, which had provided humanitarian funds for impoverished Palestinians in Israel, has abruptly cut off its support under the pretext of PLO support for Iraq. Saudi Arabia had also provided the PLO with \$6 million a month. This has also been cut, throwing the organization into a crisis.

At the same time, fighting has broken out between PLO military units near Sidon, Lebanon, and the terrorist forces of Abu Nidal. Nidal, who is typically depicted as an Iraqi agent and whose murders have typically also been blamed on the PLO, is a long-term Israeli agent provocateur. There is reason to believe that some new Abu Nidal terrorist atrocity against Israelis, or U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia, would provide the desired pretext for wiping out the PLO and launching war against the Iraqis.