

mystical archaeologist Gen. Yigal Yadin and a group of former Israeli intelligence chiefs. Likud leader Menachem Begin warned Rabin before the Premier's departure that "you have no authority to make any promises regarding the future of Israel." In the U.S. Yadin and company have been insisting that they be included at the top levels of the new government formed after the May 17 elections, and have been getting significant percentages in recently released polls used to throw Rabin on the defensive. New expansionist settlement moves into the West Bank by the Gush Emunim religious group have added to his trouble.

Rabin has dealt weakly with all these destabilizations.

He has yet to make a final decision about removing Peres from the Defense Ministry, despite early rumors to that effect. He has, according to this week's *Newsweek*, countermanded subordinates' demands that he go on the offensive against Yadin. Nor has he ordered the forceful removal of the Gush group from their illegal Kaddoum encampment in the West Bank.

Not surprisingly, Rabin was greeted upon arrival in the U.S. by extended features in the *Washington Post* and the *Baltimore Sun* stressing that he could not make a peace initiative because his internal situation was too "unstable."

The Arab Reaction To Carter

A determining question over the next days will be how the Arab states react to the Carter provocation. The pattern of Arab reaction will determine whether the Mideast will be plunged toward early war or whether the Arabs will become a prime motivating force for a definitive break with the dollar.

Saudi Arabia is apparently committed to giving the Carter Administration another month before definitively deciding on a potential policy change (see International Report).

According to the March 10 *Washington Post*, *Egyptian* officials are "disturbed" by Carter's statements, labelling them "naive," "impetuous," and "troublesome." One cited official charged that "it sounds as if he has swallowed at least some aspects of the old Allon plan." The Egyptians in Washington have as well demanded clarification from Vance on Carter's support of Israeli "defensible borders" and have joined the rest of the Arab ambassadorial pool in requesting a special meeting with Vance to insist on clarification of the Carter statements.

The pro-U.S. Arab regimes are under intensive pressure on the Carter-Rabin issue from the Palestinians and the Arab left. *Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)* spokesman Abu Maizer, in Cairo March 9, attacked Carter's "peace plan" as an "Israeli idea in U.S. language," especially since Carter totally ignored the Palestinians' national rights in his press conference. Abu Maizer summed up Carter's pronouncements as an "unjust policy."

In Lebanon, the *Lebanese Communist Party* paper *An-Nida* March 10 attacked Carter for opposing Israeli territorial withdrawals and for attempting to destroy Arab unity.

A series of meetings in the Arab sector over the coming days will reveal more profoundly the overall Arab response. On March 12, the Palestinian "parliament," the *Palestine National Council*, will meet in Cairo, and observers expect that the PNC will not make any shifts in its national covenant that does not recognize Israel's right to exist. This adamant stand on the PNC's part is widely attributed to the ultra-hard-line emanating out of Tel Aviv and Washington towards the Palestinians. The

PNC is likely, however, to vote in favor of the formation of a government-in-exile, and further coordination on policy with the neighboring Arab states has been presaged by the meeting earlier this week in Cairo between PLO chief Yasser Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein, bitter enemies since the September, 1970 massacre of Palestinians by Jordanian armed forces.

This weekend a summit meeting will be held of the Arab heads of state, following closely on the heels of the recently concluded Afro-Arab summit in Cairo. Next month, in Damascus the leaders of the Arab states neighboring Israel and the PLO will meet to discuss coordination of strategy.

The dangers of instability in the region are twofold from the Arab perspective. Regimes like Egypt's have taken the profound gamble of aligning with the U.S. in order to win political and economic advantages, especially in the confrontation with Israel. In Egypt, high-level army factions are known to be giving Egyptian President Anwar Sadat a very short time period to demonstrate that he has not been "had" by the Americans. If, in the next 1-2 months, they become convinced that this is in fact the case, Sadat is likely finished as Egypt's ruler. The devastating economic situations in Egypt, Syria and the Sudan makes this instability factor an inherent, not incidental, one.

Second, it is increasingly possible that Rockefeller intelligence networks will set loose a terrorist wave, attributed to "Palestinian extremists" angered at Arafat's "sell-out" to the Americans. This wave could target Arafat and any number of other Arab leaders for assassination attempts, thereby plunging the Middle East region into a dangerously chaotic state.

The Israel Breakaway

Finally, Carter's statements are also bound to trigger an intense reaction from the Israeli rightwing factions, angered by Carter's public support for eventual Israeli withdrawals from Arab territories. Already the Likud is calling Rabin's trip a "failure" and is calling for a parliamentary censure motion to be brought against him upon his return. This faction is the classic "breakaway" group that will use "U.S. pressure" as a pretext to bring Israel into an open war policy.