

## Syria, Libya Coordinate Peace Efforts With France And Soviet Union

An Arab offensive led by Syria and Libya — in coordination with the peace initiatives of France and the Soviet Union — is underway to oust Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who is commonly referred to in international circles as the “Kissinger puppet.”

Syrian President Hafez Assad’s decision to join the Libyan faction has been prompted by the growing realization among Arab leaders that the Sadat-U.S. option for the Middle East would lead to a fifth Arab-Israeli war and what Jordan’s King Hussein describes as a “worldwide conflagration.” Moderate Arabs such as Assad and Hussein have suddenly figured out that they stand no chance of survival at home if they follow the prostrate politics of Egypt before the U.S. diktat.

Following in the footsteps of Libya’s Qaddafi, Assad is enlisting international support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Sadat, on the other hand, has virtually exposed himself as a sell-out on the PLO question, after Cyrus Vance’s last Mideast trip. It is now mooted that Sadat is soft on the “Dayan Plan”, an offer for a separate peace proffered by Israel’s Foreign Minister to split Egypt from the rest of the Arab nations.

### *Guns on Saudis and Sadat*

Syria is “turning its heavy propaganda guns on Egypt and Saudi Arabia,” comments the British daily *Guardian*. It is a well known fact that Sadat remains in power only through the petrodollar purse strings of Saudi Prince Fahd, and the Syrians are exposing the “reactionary oil kingdom” as Sadat’s sole backer. Informed Arab sources say that Syria is splitting from Saudi Arabia and joining the Libyan camp in order to force Saudi Arabia to vacate its subservience to the Carter regime.

As a leader whose base of support rests within the minority Alawite community, Assad, whose own internal position is precarious enough, is cognizant of the destabilizing potential which could be activated against his rule by the large, Saudi-linked Sunni moslem majority.

Zuhair Mohsen, head of the Syrian-backed Saika faction of the PLO has echoed Assad’s condemnation of Sadat-Saudi treachery with the charge that there is an Arab-American conspiracy to revive the Lebanese war and bring Syria to its knees. Mohsen blamed Sadat for weakening the Arab defensive potential and said, “Syria will not abandon the Palestinian Resistance which certain reactionaries of the oil kingdoms have done.”

At the recently concluded Foreign Ministers’ meeting of the Arab League last week, Syria and Libya sponsored a proposal to have Israel publicly condemned at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly meeting in September. Sadat and the Saudis together voted down

the proposal as “too radical.” Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam also implicitly rebuked Egypt by calling for an Arab summit for October to settle intra-Arab disputes. According to the French daily *Le Monde*, Khaddam’s summit call was a thinly veiled criticism of Egypt’s refusal to end its belligerent policy toward Libya.

At the eighth-anniversary celebration of Libya’s revolution, Libya’s President Muammar Qaddafi labeled Sadat a “criminal who instigated fratricidal wars” and called on the Egyptian people to “chastize” the outlaw. Qaddafi said that there was an American-Israeli conspiracy to decimate both the Syrian army, “stuck in the mire of Lebanon” as well as the Egyptian army by keeping open the option of another war with Libya.

### *French-Soviet Backup*

The Franco-Soviet peace efforts in the Middle East are presently focused on two issues: first, to garner international support for an amendment of UN resolution 242 which would demand the recognition of Palestinian rights; secondly, to support the Syrian-PLO-Lebanese agreement to terminate all fighting in southern Lebanon. The Soviet Union has informed U.S. Ambassador Malcolm Toom that it would be coordinating efforts with France and the European Economic Community to drop the original 242 resolution, which names the Palestinians only as refugees.

Assad has manifested his cooperation with such efforts, particularly with welcoming of Arafat’s warm reception in the Soviet Union and his invitation to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to visit Syria in the next weeks.

With backup from Syria, the PLO, says *Le Monde*, “is now in a position to stand up to any American proposal in the Middle East by reinforcing its internal cohesion and stressing its alliance with the Soviet Union.” The Palestinian newspaper *Falastine Al Saoura* also declared that “Palestinian-Soviet relations were more solid than ever, reaching a decisive turning point.”

Prime Minister Raymond Barre will also visit Syria shortly no doubt to discuss the recently concluded visit of King Hussein to France. While in Paris, Hussein explicitly called on France to lead the EEC in the fight for the amendment of 242.

### *Chtaura Accords*

The key danger still remaining is the Lebanese powderkeg. According to the conservative daily *Le Figaro*, Syria and the PLO are about to implement the most decisive phase of the Chtaura Accords to halt fighting between Lebanese Christians and Palestinians.

The implementation of the third phase of the peace plan, the positioning of the newly-reconstituted Lebanese

army in southern Lebanon which will take place very soon, would not only terminate the fighting but would also force the hand of the Israelis who have been aiding the Lebanese fascists under Camille Chamoun to butcher the PLO forces. In an interview in *Le Figaro*, Lebanese Falange spokesman K. Pakradouni, a member of the Lebanese right, said that Falange leader Pierre Gemayel was in favor of the Chtaura Accords and that the only obstacles were certain Palestinian grouplets and Israel. This admission by a Politburo member of the Falange shows the strength of the Syrian-PLO drive to isolate Israel as the warmonger and establish a "reign of peace."

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## Sadat Scrambles To Stay Afloat

*The following is a characterization of the political situation inside Egypt by an Arab diplomat at the United Nations. It describes the frantic moves by President Sadat to shore up his crumbling regime in the face of growing Arab and international opposition to his role as the obsequious supporter of Henry Kissinger's diplomacy.*

Sadat is in deep trouble indeed. There is no question that, sooner or later, but certainly before next spring, Sadat is going to be overthrown. When that happens, a great deal will change in the Middle East.

Right now, Sadat is using every trick in the book. Let me give you an example. Recently, there has been the reconstitution of the old royalist Wafd party. The leader of this party, Serag Eddine, is a foolish old reactionary, about 80 years-old, and hated throughout Egypt for his role as interior minister years ago. Everyone who knows about Egyptian politics knows that Serag Eddine will go nowhere. But Sadat knows that it is better to be attacked from the right than from the left, so he encourages Serag Eddine, quietly, to rebuild the Wafd. This makes Sadat look liberal by comparison, and he hopes this will help him with the army. I doubt it will.

In the army itself, Gamassi (War Minister —ed.) plays Sadat's hard cop. Gamassi acts tough and strict, a disciplinarian, with the armed forces, and the rank-and-file, of course, grow to hate him. This took place a while ago when Gamassi refused to grant a pay increase to the army. Then, Sadat stepped in and ordered the increase. The whole affair was staged to win the army's loyalty to Sadat!

Otherwise, Sadat has built up a heavy layer of pork-barrels around him, people who control various aspects of the economy and win support for the regime via patronage. For example, Osman Osman, the former construction minister, controls a huge engineering and construction firm, and through this controls engineers and skilled workers who need jobs. Sayed Marei, the speaker of the Parliament, plays a similar role in agriculture. Many of these people are related to Sadat.

But the people are truly sick of this. I know the end is coming for Sadat.

*Several sources, including U.S. News and World Report, have noted recently that the Egyptian officer corps is defecting rapidly from Sadat. Analysts report that the key to the crisis is the growing feeling in military circles that Sadat's break with the USSR, which has refused to resupply the Egyptian forces, has reached the point where national security is jeopardized. Arab sources in the United States report that the most likely scenario is a quiet ultimatum for the General Staff to "retire" Sadat in the national interest.*

*It is generally recognized that the fall of Sadat is supported in varying degrees by France, the USSR, Libya, Syria, and the PLO. France and the Soviets are especially interested in toppling Sadat to remove the danger of renewed Egyptian attacks on Libya, where both Paris and Moscow have interests. In addition, the emergence of a stronger nationalist regime in Cairo would turn the tables on neighboring Saudi Arabia, and would therefore put pressure on the Saudis to loosen their own dependence on the U.S. and shift into closer ties with Western Europe and U.S. conservative circles.*

## Shah's Tour East Sets Stage For Bargaining With Carter

The Shah of Iran's just completed visit to Poland and Czechoslovakia has delivered a clear message to the Carter Administration that its demands that Iran limit its arms build up and nuclear energy program are not acceptable. The Shah will meet with Jimmy Carter sometime this fall, and it is anticipated that these two issues will be at the top of the agenda.

Just preceding the Shah's hastily arranged trip to the East bloc, a round of negotiations between Iran and the U.S. over the sale of eight nuclear reactors once again collapsed. Akhbar Etemad, the chief Iranian negotiator and director of the Iranian Nuclear Energy Organization, refused to accept the terms of the sale.

These terms would have virtually destroyed Iran's strong pro-nuclear energy drive, a critical element in Iran's long term development plans and one which has been closely coordinated with France. Etemad's arrival in the U.S. was preceded by Carter's decision to postpone the sale of the highly sophisticated airborne radar system, AWACS. The Iranian government publicly took both the AWACS decision and the U.S. nuclear reactor sales terms as affronts.

As a result, the Shah is going straight to the East bloc for increased trade relations including prospective purchases of arms and reactors. This move is not only motivated by Washington's recent behavior but is even