

Brits, Dayan Undermine Sadat Peace Offensive

With the arrival of President Anwar Sadat in the U.S. to extract from the Carter Administration support for Egypt's nearly collapsed peace initiative, British intelligence operatives in Israel and the U.S. have launched an effort to ensure that nothing comes of Sadat's visit ... except a heightening of tensions internationally.

Sadat's trip, which will also take him to six European countries including Romania and the Vatican, is part of an aggressive Egyptian campaign to secure crucial outside support for his peace drive and to bring pressure upon Israel to make concessions on the crucial Palestinian issue, key to a peace settlement.

To counter the Sadat trip, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, Britain's Number One saboteur of the Sadat-Begin peace dialogue, will arrive in the U.S. (the same day that Sadat leaves here for Europe) for a one-week coast-to-coast "emergency" speaking tour to build a national climate against any breakthrough that Sadat might achieve in his talks with President Carter. At the same time, several of Dayan's colleagues will go to Europe "in an attempt to offset the Sadat trip" there, according to the *Baltimore Sun*.

U.S. Paralysis

While in the U.S. Sadat will lay out to Carter the risks of allowing the Mideast situation to stagnate any longer. However, there is little indication that the U.S. will stop playing games with linguistics and terminology, which avoids dealing with the substance of a comprehensive settlement.

Boxed in and manipulated by Vice President Mondale, security adviser Brzezinski, the British-controlled Israel Lobby, and other Kissinger allies, Carter has little intention to accommodate Sadat's demands, according to several Mideast analysts, and instead will urge "moderation" on Sadat and try to get him to opt for a dangerous separate treaty with Israel rather than an overall settlement.

Exacerbating the deadlock, Alfred Atherton, Undersecretary of State for Middle East Affairs, shuttled his way through the Middle East last week, peddling a mushy proposal for an agreement on principles for further negotiations that he had worked out with Dayan. Predictably, Egypt spurned the proposal because of its failure to deal with the substance of the Middle East dilemma — the Palestinian problem. On cue, Atherton let it be known through his spokesman that there would be no "dramatic breakthrough" in the Sadat-Carter talks in Washington, while the *New York Times* reported that Carter would try to persuade Sadat that the "peace

negotiations ... would be prolonged" for many months. One prominent Egypt watcher said that Carter will tell Sadat that the talks will take six to eight months to reach a conclusion!

The Egyptians are increasingly apprehensive about such vagueness on the part of the U.S. The Egyptian daily *Al Akhbar* warned against "a negative American diplomacy" that could lead to a new Cold War, while Sadat, in a series of interviews is making it clear he will insist on a U.S. statement on the Palestinian problem and expects a major breakthrough (contrary to Atherton's predictions), or else "everything will collapse."

Capsulizing Egyptian suspicions, the Feb. 1 *London Times* quotes an Egyptian Foreign Ministry official:

The American formula (agreement on principles) is not bad, but it all depends on the explanation and interpretation that goes with it. We do not want something that can later be interpreted as something else. It has to be clear from the first. Palestinian self-determination means for us that real self-determination has to be accepted in that spirit by all parties. We are getting to the stage now where we cannot afford vagueness.

A West German government spokesman asserted that Atherton's Kissinger-style diplomacy and ambiguous proposals had "weakened the Carter Administration's position" by seeking to force Sadat to accept a settlement on Dayan's terms. He added that the U.S. had "abandoned the Aswan formula, and Egypt knows it." The Aswan formulation was put forth last month by Carter while in Egypt backing the rights of Palestinians "to participate in the determination of their own future." Egyptian officials have indicated that this formulation, albeit inadequate, is the "bottom line" for them as they will accept nothing less.

Europe Backs Off

With Dayan's cronies moving to undercut the Arabs' "European option" — an option that Sadat had hoped to brandish before Carter to force him to accommodate Arab peace initiatives — Europe is gradually backing off from its earlier commitments to support the Sadat effort via regional development proposals and calls to reconvene Geneva peace talks as the forum for an overall settlement.

Last week, the European Economic Community announced that it had decided not to put forth any Mideast policy. Reflecting the tremendous pressure that Bonn (a

strong supporter of a comprehensive, development-based Mideast peace) has fallen under as a result of the scandal surrounding the illegal sale of arms to Syria and the new affair concerning mercury-poisoned Israeli oranges — both British-backed plots to stymie Euro-Arab political and economic cooperation — the West German Foreign Ministry has stated that the EEC will leave the Egyptians and Israelis to themselves. “The West Germans will take a lower profile in the area,” concurred several Mideast observers.

Blamed on the synthetic “Arab Revolutionary Army Palestinian Commando,” the “oranges affair” in particular has aggravated the deterioration of the Mideast situation, triggering paranoid tirades from Begin and exacerbating Israel’s intransigence. In addition, Sadat’s

championing of Palestinian rights has also been undermined, despite the PLO’s assertion that no Palestinians were responsible for the bizarre event.

The same day that news of the poisoned fruit was leaked, the British press loudly headlined the heightened danger of war in the Middle East, with the *Guardian* blaring, “Cairo Ready to Return to War.” Other press played up pessimistic statements by Egyptian Vice President Mubarak in Kuwait, in an effort to “break the illusion of peace.” “We know we are dealing with a very difficult and tiresome enemy,” said Mubarak, according to the *London Times* on Feb. 1. “Should we fail to achieve peace, we would have to resort to other means, possibly to war.” Mubarak pledged to “follow the path of peace to the end, as long as it is clear.”

— Nancy Parsons

An Unlikely Alliance In Arab World

An unlikely alliance in the Arab world, led by Saudi Arabia and Iraq, is working to restore the political unity of the Arab world and to prepare for a possible Arab realignment away from the United States and toward Western Europe.

In an angry commentary, the Algerian Press Service last week sharply criticized Iraq, nominally a member of the bloc of Arab hardliners, for providing covert support of the regime of Egypt’s President Anwar Sadat. Iraq, the Algerians charged, was “trying to rehabilitate Sadat in the Arab world” and was coordinating this action with Saudi Arabia. What provoked the unusual Algerian report was a decision by the Iraqi leadership not to send a delegation to the meeting of the hardline Arab “Steadfastness Front” that met in Algeria on Feb. 2. The Iraqi decision, which was taken ostensibly because of deep differences between the Iraqi and Syrian parties, had the practical effect of strengthening the Egyptian position by weakening the overall impact of the anti-Sadat bloc in the Arab world that includes Libya, Syria, and Algeria.

According to Radio Jerusalem, Iraq last week took an initiative to reopen the Egyptian embassy in Baghdad — which was closed following last November’s meeting of the hardliners — and there were reports that Vice-President Mubarak of Egypt might visit Iraq soon. In addition, the Iraqi press agency announced that it had proposed to Saudi Arabia the convening of an Arab summit conference in Baghdad.

But the indications of a Saudi-Iraqi tactical alliance do not extend merely to the immediate political situation. On a broader level, the Iraqis and Saudis have given signs of close cooperation on the financial and oil fronts as well. Last week Iraq and Saudi Arabia, along with Kuwait, Iran and Venezuela met at OPEC headquarters to discuss the prospects for the declining dollar, and resolved to demand — along with key industrial forces of Western Europe — that the United States take strong action to defend the dollar’s value. Iraq, which maintains close ties to the Soviet Union as well as the Gaullist tendency in Europe, and the Saudis, who remain virtually a province of the United States and the Aramco

faction, thus represent together a kernel of the necessary international alignment that must come together to rebuild the world monetary system.

An important indication that the American industrial forces and the Rockefellers may be seeking to use Saudi leverage to gain an upper hand in Washington is that the Saudis are beginning to develop closer relations with pro-gold industrialists in France, Switzerland, and elsewhere. An important Saudi businessman, for instance, has just concluded a major business deal with the big French aerospace firm Dassault, whose interests are widely represented in military and political intelligence networks throughout the Arab world. In addition, the Saudi interests are seeking to provide capital to consolidate the several regional French airline companies into a single unit. Such French-Saudi links are only one example of what is developing into a close partnership, mediated in part by the U.S. — Rockefeller and Texas — but the Dassault linkage will help forge a working relationship between the Saudis and French circles throughout the Arab world.

Where this will be tested is in North Africa. Recently, President Houari Boumediene of Algeria made an important trip to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the USSR where, among the issues discussed, the bothersome issue of the Polisario “liberation front” in the former Spanish Sahara was discussed. The Saudis, Iraq, and the USSR all oppose the Polisario, which is a fraudulent guerrilla group backed by Algeria — and, presumably, they each told the Algerians to rid themselves of the Polisario. Because France supports its allies, Morocco and Mauritania, in their opposition to Polisario’s claim to their territory, the Polisario issue has severely damaged Franco-Arab relations in that France is seen as intervening into an Arab dispute. Thus, the crucial question is whether the Saudis and Iraq can effectively resolve the Western Sahara issue in order to improve French-Arab ties. Such an action will provide a firmer basis for rapprochement between the Arabs and the Western Europeans, and will therefore strengthen the negotiating position of Egypt’s Anwar Sadat.

— Bob Dreyfus