

A commentary in the Feb. 9 Jerusalem Post by Mark Segal entitled "Shenanigans at Shilo" issues an urgent call to move against Sharon now.

Sharon has embarrassed the Likud government on previous occasions—particularly by his declarations on settlement policy, over which Begin put him in charge. If Begin thought he could thereby neutralize a potentially dangerous man, then he was proven by events to be as mistaken in his judgment as former Premier Rabin, who sought to still Sharon's sharp criticism of the army command by appointing him his special adviser.

A small minority cannot be allowed to dictate policy to an entire nation, for that way lies anarchy. Mr. Begin should put his foot down and show he is in charge.

Lebanon Flare-up

The latest outburst of fighting in Lebanon provoked by right-wing extremist and ex-president Camille

Chamoun, whom Sadat described as a "life-long British agent" in an interview in October magazine, is leveraging the war-mongering efforts of Dayan and Sharon. Exacerbating the situation, Israeli military leaders linked to the Dayan network are renewing Israel's commitments to "defend our besieged Christian brothers across the border" against the Palestinian-Syrian threat. Ominously, Israeli armed forces chiefs, including Weizman, held meetings at the Lebanon-Israel border last week to discuss Israeli aid to the right-wing forces, one day before the commander of the southern Lebanese right-wing forces, Maj. Saad Haddad, called for a "Christian government in exile" so that Syria's military actions could be labeled an invasion of a sovereign entity. According to Christian sources cited by the Feb. 13 Jerusalem Post, "this is the only way the Syrians can be expelled."

Arafat And Fatah Faction Encourage PLO Moderation

The leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the central command of the Lebanese leftist national movement held a joint meeting chaired by PLO chief Yasser Arafat on Feb. 1 to discuss the continued tensions in southern Lebanon. Two important decisions taken at that meeting reflect the efforts on the part of the moderate faction within the PLO to change the image of the organization from that of being terrorist to that of a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people for future Mideast peace negotiations.

Firstly, the PLO vowed to "clean out" the anarchists and extremists within its ranks in the south of Lebanon. These elements have sparked repeated conflicts with the Christian Falange in the area — conflicts which have threatened to bring direct Israeli intervention on the side of the Christians.

Secondly, the PLO declared that the majority of its guerrilla strongholds in southern Lebanon will be vacated and relinquished to the Lebanese leftist national front. These strongholds include, significantly, PLO offices in the coastal cities of Sidon, a center of strong leftist presence during the Lebanese civil war, and Tyre, the port where weapons have been shipped to the PLO. As well, Palestinian guerrillas are to withdraw from

Nabatiyeh, a site of continued conflict with the Falange since the end of the civil war in 1976.

The decision to end the PLO's longstanding military presence in southern Lebanon is significant for two reasons. Most importantly, it is a clear signal to Israel that the responsible wing of the PLO and Fatah (the central commando organization within the PLO) is not interested in continuing terrorist activities against Israel, but want to negotiate peace. Secondly, the gesture reduces the likelihood of a flareup in the volatile area which could easily draw in Syrian occupying troops, and trigger a new Arab-Israeli war.

A week after the joint meeting on southern Lebanon, a spokesman from the PLO, Said Kamal, urged the United States to adopt a clear and positive stand toward the Palestinian cause. Kamal, a leading PLO moderate from Cairo, urged the U.S. as a superpower to shoulder a special responsibility to the Palestinian cause — a signal that the PLO wants to open official negotiations with Washington. The same day, reports from the Qatar News Agency indicated that the Fatah command was requesting that the Iraqi government hand over Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal who has been implicated in the murder of leading Palestinian moderate Said Hammami last month in London.