

---

## ISRAEL

---

# New Reagan-Begin clash in the works

by Judith Wyer

Another confrontation between President Ronald Reagan and the Israeli government of Menachem Begin is brewing, barely a month after the United States suspended its Memorandum of Understanding with Israel when Israel suddenly illegally annexed the Golan Heights on Dec. 17.

On Jan. 9, days before Secretary of State Alexander Haig arrived in the Middle East, President Reagan issued a statement through the State Department saying that the Memorandum of Understanding would not be resumed; Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger vented his anger at the Golan land grab on national television on "Good Morning America" Jan. 13; and rumors are flying in Washington that some diehard supporters of Begin will be purged from the National Security Council under newly appointed National Security Adviser William Clark.

Moreover, Weinberger has announced a trip to the Middle East starting Feb. 4, in which Israel is conspicuously left off the itinerary.

All this does not bode well for the success of Haig's effort to resume Palestinian autonomy talks between Israel and Egypt and win approval for the appointment of a special U.S. emissary to conduct "shuttle diplomacy" à la Henry Kissinger in the region. Haig is the administration's most vocal supporter of the Begin government and of Begin's insistence that all Middle East peace negotiations be kept within the Camp David sphere.

President Reagan has publicly mooted approval for the broader peace framework proposed by Saudi Crown Prince Fahd, which foresees Arab recognition of Israel in return for the creation of a Palestinian state.

Informed sources report that Israel is preparing a new round of provocations to drive a wedge between the United States and the moderate Arab bloc led by Saudi Arabia.

- The Mossad—Israeli foreign intelligence—"will stage some kind of terrorist action inside Saudi Arabia using Israeli agents but making it look like radical Palestinians and Yemenis," according to a Washington diplomatic source. The action is intended to dramatize the arguments of Moshe Arens, the new Israeli ambas-

sador who will arrive in Washington this month, that Saudi Arabia is too "unstable" to be a U.S. strategic partner.

Arens, a confidant of Begin, reportedly will arrive with a mandate to sour U.S.-Saudi relations and reverse the U.S. commitment to Saudi stability that was won when the Senate approved the AWACS sale last October. Arens stunned even some of the closest Israeli supporters by his vitriolic attacks on Saudi Arabia during a U.S. visit last October to lobby against AWACS.

- Begin's government is contemplating annexation of the West Bank, according to European and U.S. intelligence sources, who point to statements in early January by Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Shamir told the Israeli press that Israel could accept peace "only under conditions that will enable us to continue to exist, and that means that Judea and Samaria remain within the boundaries of Eretz Israel." "Judea and Samaria" are Biblical names for the West Bank, and "Eretz Israel" is Begin's religious name for the country.

- An "imminent Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon" is signalled by the recent collapse of the alliance between Begin and the Lebanese Christian Falange," according to an informed Middle East watcher at Georgetown University. In the past the Falangists have acted as Israel's mercenaries, but a "falling out" with Falangist Saad Haddad, who commanded the Lebanese territory bordering with Israel, has reportedly led to Begin's considering occupying the so-called Lebanese buffer zone.

## Opposition to Begin

Zionist leaders both inside and outside Israel are beginning to voice opposition to such actions, fearing that Prime Minister Begin may totally isolate Israel at a moment when it is economically strapped.

A signal of things to come was Haig's dropping of the "special emissary" plan, which was supported by Israel. After Haig met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Jan. 13, the Cairo press reported he was withdrawing the plan; neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia liked the idea.

Shimon Peres, the chief of Israel's opposition Labor Party, issued a declaration rejecting "a preemptive war against the Palestine Liberation Organization, or a military solution to the Syrian missiles in Lebanon" — the pretexts that would be used for an Israeli invasion. But there was resistance even inside Begin's own cabinet.

Housing Minister David Levy challenged both Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon for their covert support for the extremist settlers who are attempting to block the return of the last parcel of the Sinai in April, which would be in accordance with the Camp David treaty with Egypt.