

# The Lebanon 'ceasefire': a new humiliation for the United States in the Mideast?

by Judith Wyer

The sudden announcement of a Sept. 25 ceasefire in Lebanon, negotiated by U.S. Special Envoy Robert MacFarlane, sets up the potential for a strategic humiliation of the United States, which the U.S.S.R. and its Middle Eastern allies are ready to exploit.

The ceasefire agreement in total represents a treasonous appeasement of the aggressors in the Lebanese war, the Druze Muslims, the Syrians, and their Soviet patron, and smells of the kind of "crisis management" operations run by Henry Kissinger, the mentor of MacFarlane and Secretary of State George Shultz.

The terms of the ceasefire more than satisfy Syria's long-standing "Greater Syria" policy to gobble up all of Lebanon not already occupied by Israel, and ominously conforms to the 10-year-old policy of Henry Kissinger to partition Lebanon. By recognizing Syria's right to dominate most of Lebanon, the United States will be hard-pressed to engage in future military intervention against Syrian-backed forces, should the fighting renew, without admitting its own policy failure. As a result, Kissinger's boys have gone out of their way to checkmate President Reagan's stated policy of defending the sovereignty of Lebanon even if it meant using military force.

The two critical aspects of the ceasefire accord are the establishment of a national reconciliation conference of the chieftains of Lebanon's 16 ethnic and religious groupings to negotiate a new constitutional power-sharing agreement, and the use of a United Nations-connected force to oversee the truce.

From all indications, Shultz and his counterparts in the European participants in the multinational force—France, Italy, and Britain—designed this accord to appease the Soviet Union. It is thought that the Europeans might have agreed to back President Reagan's stance on arms negotiations with the U.S.S.R. if the United States backed off from a full-scale military intervention in Lebanon, as Reagan had let it be known he was prepared to do. The same week the State Department and the three European countries were putting together the ceasefire agreement, Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi visited West Germany, Britain, and Holland. Craxi also conferred with Paul Nitze, the chief of the U.S. arms

negotiating team in Geneva. Craxi then made a dramatic turnaround and announced his support for the deployment of the Pershing II and cruise missiles, scheduled to be stationed in continental Europe in December. Previously Craxi was promoting a proposal to put off emplacement of the Euro-missiles for six months beyond the December deadline, even if there was no progress in arms control talks with Moscow. The next day the ceasefire in Lebanon was agreed to and the fighting stopped.

## Neville Chamberlain tactics

The terms of the ceasefire represent the same kind of dangerous appeasement as that of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the architect of the Munich "compromise" of 1938 that handed over the Sudetenland to Adolf Hitler, based on the the argument that the Nazis' landlust would be satisfied and war averted. The tragic results of that appeasement are a matter of historical record.

Two days before the ceasefire agreement, French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson was quoted in *Le Monde* declaring that the U.S.S.R. had a role to play in the resolution of the Lebanese crisis. On Sept. 19, Cheysson issued a harsh attack on the United States for its military intervention in Lebanon. Italian Prime Minister Craxi earlier in September had already gone on the record asking that Soviet troops be included in a "neutral" peacekeeping force in the Chouf Mountains, a proposal seconded by the *Financial Times* of London which represents the thinking of the British Foreign Ministry.

On Sept. 27 Shultz met with the foreign ministers of the three European countries to discuss a "neutral observer" force for the volatile Lebanese Chouf area, which would include forces from the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization, which already has 50 troops including Soviet participants in Beirut.

Now both Damascus and Moscow have let it be known that they have no intention of being satisfied by the ploys of Shultz et al. They have forcefully indicated they do not intend to share Lebanon, and diplomatic observers say that the current ceasefire will be only a respite contending forces will use to rearm.

Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly

Sept. 28, Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Khalim Khaddam excoriated the United States for its role in Lebanon. He declared that the multinational force "reminds us of the colonialist expeditions through previous stages of the history of the region." Walid Jumblatt, the clan leader of the Druze Muslims, stated that the Druze were prepared to fight against the French forces again, as they had when they defeated the French—with the help of the British colonialists—in the "anti-colonialist struggle" in the last century.

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko praised the ceasefire within 48 hours of its announcement, but declared that the U.S. and Israeli troops had to leave Lebanon. Gromyko failed to mention the 40,000-man Syrian force occupying well over half of Lebanon. On Sept. 28 the Soviet news agency Tass said that Moscow had "positively assessed" the ceasefire but concluded that Lebanon's problems would only be settled if Israel withdrew and the United States halted "its crude interference" there. From all appearances, the Shultz-MacFarlane appeasement will lead to the Soviet-Syrian demand being met through a bloody renewal of fighting far worse than what has occurred over the past month.

### Setting up the Marines

If Syria and the U.S.S.R. are serious about their demand for the U.S.-led multinational force to leave Lebanon, the question arises: Why are they opposing an alternative U.N.-connected force?

Moscow's actions indicate that it prefers to humiliate the United States when the U.S. forces are caught in a new wave of ethnic fighting, which will probably start up again in the southern suburbs of Beirut that surround the U.S. Marine headquarters.

Within hours of the ceasefire, Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq Wazzan announced the resignation of the 10-man cabinet, fulfilling the Syrian demand for his ouster and that of the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Kamal Assad, both of them Muslims. The likelihood of the Lebanese chieftains peacefully sitting down and agreeing to a power-sharing arrangement is remote. The rivalry between these leaders is so intense that for nearly a decade they have not been able to sit in a cabinet together, and Lebanon has only had cabinets of neutral technocrats. Now that there is no government in Lebanon, the danger is that the longstanding ethnic rivalries will erupt even more wildly in a powerplay which will catch U.S.-led multinational forces in the cross fire.

Camille Chamoun, the old Maronite Christian warlord with British and Soviet connections, was the first to pull out of the reconciliation talks Sept. 28. It is reliably reported that Chamoun is active in mobilizing Shi'ite Muslims to defend Shi'ite Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament Kamal Assad against Syria's bid to oust him. With this comes the prospect that the Shi'ites will be mobilized to fight in the densely populated south Beirut area where they number about 300,000. The United States would be hard-pressed to intervene utilizing its massive naval fire power for fear of causing civilian casualties.

The growing fear is that this ceasefire, like so many others in Lebanon, will offer a period for rearming. The Lebanese Army is warning that the Syrian-backed Druze militia are already rearming. The military wing of the Lebanese Falange, the blood rivals of the Syrians and their Muslim allies, is also expected to fight.

There is also increasing danger that the head of the mass-based Shi'ah Muslim Al Amal organization, Nabi Berri, will lose control of his forces. Since mid-September Khomeini-allied renegades from Al Amal have provoked fighting in the area surrounding the Marines. On Sept. 29 two U.S. Army officers were kidnapped by radical Shi'ites, and rescued by forces of Al Amal close to Berri, a moderate who remains publicly allied to Gemayel.

The Lebanon dilemma is the fulfillment of a longstanding British-Soviet deal, with complicity from Sharon-linked forces in Israel, to finish off U.S. influence in the area. Exactly one year ago, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and a group of British officials associated with a Kissinger enterprise to illegally buy up land on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, met at the Chamoun estate in Lebanon to plot the division of Lebanon between Israel and Syria, excluding the United States from what has been its Middle East intelligence center. About the same time, as *EIR* reported, Sharon had a secret rendezvous on Cyprus with a high-level official of the Soviet military intelligence service GRU, on a scheme to draw the United States into Lebanon, and humiliate it to break U.S. influence in the region.

### A balkanized Muslim Lebanon

A Swiss-based Muslim convert with close contacts with the Khomeini regime boasted to a reporter the week of Sept. 26 that Lebanon is now well on the way to becoming an Islamic state. During his meetings with Syrian President Assad in September MacFarlane is reported by the Sept. 27 *Washington Post* to have pledged that Syria could regain its previous political and economic influence in Lebanon by accepting MacFarlane's ceasefire agreement. MacFarlane reportedly promised that this would be accomplished by bringing pro-Syrian Muslim groupings into a dominant position. Syria is determined to reconstitute its empire which included Lebanon and was destroyed during the early 20th-century Sykes-Picot agreement.

If Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, who prior to being elected to the presidency was known for his close ties to Syria, is not able to meet Syria's demand to give Syrian-backed Muslim minorities dominant political power in Lebanon, then it is expected that Syria will make good on its repeated threat of installing a puppet government of its own, probably centered around former Lebanese President Suleiman Franjeh, and Prime Minister Rashid Karami, both members of the Syrian-controlled National Salvation Party. A coup against Gemayel will come through renewed fighting as indicated in an interview with Franjeh in the Soviet Communist Party daily *Pravda*, Sept. 28, where he warned that the U.S.-negotiated ceasefire solves nothing.