

tative in the U.N. Security Council opposed the idea: that the word "homeland" would figure in a resolution favorable to the Egyptian delegate.

Sadat: This is a delicate problem which I prefer not to discuss publicly. Both extremist Israelis and Arabs would profit from it in order to create new difficulties.

R: Do you think you can convince President Carter to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as a valid interlocutor in the negotiations?

S: This question was discussed at length in my talks with Mr. Giscard d'Estaing. I consider an American-PLO dialogue to be not only indispensable but also of crucial value to all the parties involved, including the Israelis. That will facilitate their task, as well as our own, in the search for a definitive settlement.

R: Nevertheless, the Israelis insist that they cannot negotiate with an organization the Charter of which calls for the dismantling of their country.

S: This is only a pretext. The resolutions adopted during the recently concluded National Palestinian Congress constitute a major turn in that the PLO is now qualified to negotiate a state in the territory of the West Bank and Gaza. I know that Arafat's position will be still more relaxed if he is invited to participate in the Geneva negotiations. In any case, it is clear that these negotiations will open up the possibility of a definitive peace which all Arab representatives will support, I repeat, all of them. What more is necessary? Guarantees for the future? They will be given on both sides."

In enumerating the points of discussion with Giscard d'Estaing, President Sadat suddenly referred to developments in Africa.

S: I am very disturbed with the turn of events in Africa, in particular in Zaire. The Soviets are conducting shady maneuvers from one end of the continent to the other. As for the civil war in Zaire, from all evidence, it is not a question of an internal affair, as stated. The Katangans are supplied with perfect Soviet tanks, the T-54s and T-55s, which are just as good as the American made M-60s. We know something about these tanks since the Egyptian Army used this Soviet material during the October war. Now, these tanks did not fall from the sky. The situation is critical. I wonder where the next coup will be in Africa.

R: Do you mean Egypt?

S: Yes, since the Soviets have already begun to incite trouble in my country. But I refer specifically to Sudan where any crisis would have repercussions in Egypt. We will be directly implicated because of our common defense pact with General Numeiry. Even though the unified political direction which was recently created among Egypt, Sudan, and Syria is pointed at no specific country, it is understood that we will forbid any subversion from wherever it comes, the Soviet Union, Libya, or elsewhere.

This Means War

The following is an interview with a Harvard oil expert:

Q: How do you think Carter will handle Sadat?

A: Carter will propose a plan to Sadat that even the extreme right-wing elements in the Egyptian cabinet will not accept.

Q: Yes, but this means war.

A: Correct

Q: But this does not make any sense.

A: Tell this to Carter and to the Jewish Lobby.

Q: Why the Jewish Lobby?

A: Look who supported the Carter campaign, the Jewish Lobby. Who funds the Jewish? The oil companies. Carter has to serve his masters.

Q: What about the Saudis, how will they react? There are reports that the Saudis are putting pressure on Carter for a Geneva conference because they are afraid of the radicalization of the Persian Gulf.

A: Carter is pushing the Saudis to believe this. The real question is, what kind of radicalization you can have in the Persian Gulf? Any radicalization in the area means terrorism, which gives the pretext for U.S. military intervention in the area.

Q: This means war too.

A: I know this. Carter thinks that the only way for U.S. policies in the Middle East is war. That is the only way that Carter can keep the U.S. alliances with Saudi Arabia together.

Soviets Quicken Diplomacy For Mideast Peace

Over the past two weeks, the Soviet Union has quickened its political and economic intervention into the Middle East arena. The Soviets have sent leading officials to North Africa and the Persian Gulf and have received visiting leading representatives from the Palestine Liberation Organization, Kuwait, and Tunisia. The aim repeatedly stressed in joint communique and in prominent articles in the Soviet press has been the necessity of convening a Geneva conference, with full Palestinian movement participation.

Among the imminent results of the diplomacy could be the beginnings of a rapprochement between the Soviets

and Egypt. London's Daily Express reported this week that Arafat intends while in Moscow to mediate between the Soviet and Egyptian leaderships. On March 30, a new Egyptian-Soviet trade pact was signed, increasing the volume of bilateral trade by 14 percent over last year's levels.

A second key angle in Soviet involvement in the Mideast is the likelihood that the groundwork is being laid for the incorporation of oil-producing and other Arab countries into the planned June-July transfer ruble multilateral trade relations. Knowledgeable observers also speculated this week that the subject of just-

completed Iraq-Soviet high-level economic discussions was to lay the groundwork for Iraqi use of the transfer ruble later this year. Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, whose country has been in the forefront of the ongoing transfer ruble discussions, is scheduled to travel to Iraq and Libya in June.

Soviet Mideast Diplomacy In High Gear

March 22 — Soviet Admiral Gorshkov in *Tunisia*

March 30 — *Soviet-Egyptian* trade pact signed, increasing bilateral trade by 14 percent over last year's levels.

March 31 — Soviet Defense Minister Dimitri Ustinov and Soviet Chief of Staff Nikolai Ogarkov reported by Soviet news agency TASS to be holding negotiations in *Algiers* with Algerian leadership, same day as Cuban President Fidel Castro arrives in Algiers.

March 31 — While in *Mozambique* to sign friendship pact, Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny insists that Geneva peace conference must "obligatorily" include Palestine Liberation Organization participation.

April 1 — *Kuwaiti* Defense Minister returns from Moscow with details of concluded arms pact between the Soviet Union and Kuwait.

April 2 — Soviet economic delegation arrives in *Iraq* to forward work of Soviet-Iraqi Joint Economic and Technology Committee. Completes joint protocol April 5.

April 4 — *Tunisian* Prime Minister Hedi Nouria arrives in Moscow, is told by Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin that Geneva must "necessarily" be held with a "delegation of the Palestinian resistance."

April 4 — *Palestine Liberation Organization* head Yasser Arafat arrives in Moscow, with PLO Executive Committee. Arafat meets Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev, Fidel Castro April 7.

April 4 — Pravda commentary on Middle East repeats last month's Soviet Mideast policy formulation of Brezhnev in front of a Soviet trade union congress, with addition that Israel's existence as a state is "beyond debate."

April 5 — Leading commentator V. Kudryavtsev strongly affirms Soviet support for Palestinian resistance movement, attacks Carter Administration Mideast policy.

Early April — *Syrian* President Hafez Assad expected in Moscow; exact date unspecified.

Palestinians, Syria Sweeping Chamoun From Southern Lebanon

LEBANON

Palestinian militia with military and political support from Syria, opened an offensive last week in southern Lebanon to destroy the extremist forces of right-wing warlord Camille Chamoun, who enjoys Israeli backing.

Heavy fighting is reported in the key towns and regional supply centers of Qlaia and Marjayoun, which, according to late reports, are on the verge of falling to the Palestinians, an event that will shatter Chamoun's hold on the south. Several villages, including the town of Taibe which the Chamounists had seized only last week, are now under Palestinian control.

The Palestinian military operation, which is also receiving strong support from the forces of the Lebanese left, was fully sanctioned by the quadripartite committee of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, which oversees Lebanon. Hours before the offensive began, Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat met with Zuhair Mohsen, head of the Syrian-controlled Palestinian group Saiqa and with Syria's top officer in Lebanon, Maj. Gen. Naji Jamil, to work out the details of the offensive. Syria's agreement to give support is a

reversal of its role during the 1976 Lebanese civil war when Syria acted in concert with Chamoun and the Lebanese right ring.

Last week, Syria's official government daily *Al Baath* castigated Israel for supporting Chamoun and prolonging the Lebanon crisis. *Al Baath* warned: "This is a situation that we cannot tolerate any longer." A delegation of Lebanese rightists recently in Syria to solidify relations with President Hafez Assad were instead told by Damascus to "end their alliance with Israel."

Coordinated moves to liquidate the Chamounists began last month when Lebanese President Elias Sarkis maneuvered Chamoun's political isolation. Backed by Syria, Sarkis ordered a reorganization of the Lebanese Army in preparation for the operation in the south, ousting pro-Chamoun commander Hanna Saeed and replacing him with Col. Khoury, a moderate. In retaliation, Chamoun called a general strike, which never took place following a rain of denunciations from Falangist leader Pierre Gemayel, who in recent months has dropped his own extremist positions.

Danger

While the *New York Times* warned of the "acute danger of Syrian-Israeli military clashes" growing out of