

that the first round of contacts and consultations of the committee's representatives attained strong support throughout the world. Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze in a meeting with Morocco's Foreign Minister Abdel Latif Al Filali, pointed out that his country «fully supports the peace efforts by the committee,» and the priority is that Israel has to «stop interfering in the Lebanese affairs and to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.»

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas stated that France «confidently supports the committee's mission, adding his country's preparation to «support any useful step that can help in resolving the Lebanese crisis.» (Al Nida, June 29)

In a joint statement, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and President Francois Mitterrand of France appealed for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon and a cut-off of arms deliveries to Lebanese factions involved in the conflict. The statement said that both of them «are convinced that Lebanon must remain a sovereign, independent and united country with its territorial integrity respected.» It said they «called for an immediate cease-fire, rigorously respected as an in-

dispensable condition for the establishment of a constructive inter-Lebanese dialogue, aiming at national reconciliation and peaceful building of a country founded on a balance of the interests of all Lebanese communities.» (AP, July 6th.)

It was reported by *Al Safir* that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal that Britain supports the committee in its efforts «to reach a solution to the Lebanese crisis» as well as «achieving peace, independence and sovereignty.» (*Al Safir*, June 20)

In spite of the worldwide support to the top-level committee, it has been still facing many obstacles, first and foremost General Aoun who has constantly tried to torpedo every effort to get the Lebanon settlement out of its impasse. First of all, he was apparently disappointed because the summit's resolutions did not call openly for the withdrawal of Syria's troops from Lebanon. The resolutions of the Arab summit were fully supported by Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces. Acting Prime Minister Salim Hoss was quick to declare support to the summit's resolutions, «I welcome

the resolutions of the Arab summit and hope they will be implemented as soon as possible.» (AP, May 29)

Therefore, Aoun constantly threatens further escalation saying that «roads leading to capitals of occupation (forces) will not be safe henceforth.» (AP, June 19)

His stubborn insistence of only lifting the blockades deliberately aims at foiling the Arab committee in order for it to change its role into a security committee as is the case of the previous six-man committee. Based on this, he wants the Arabs to take «the appropriate action to resolve the Lebanese crisis» or he will go to the UN to seek help. «We are determined to go to the end. I will take the necessary measures needed for independence. Maybe I will be compelled to fight,» said Aoun. (AP, May 24)

Instead of responding positively to the latest call of the three-man committee to invite Lebanese MP's to meet outside Lebanon, which was welcomed by the majority of the Lebanese people, Aoun refused under the pretext of the illegality of holding the meeting outside Lebanon.

It is obvious that he wouldn't have

Destruction in West Beirut. ►

