

gone further in escalating the situation militarily and politically, if it had not been for the encouragement he received from some Arab and non-Arab circles.

The confrontation between Syria and Iraq is another obstacle added to those facing the Arab committee. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tarik Aziz told reporters after a five-hour session in the summit: «We are still looking at the options. The main one is for total Syrian withdrawal. If that is not achieved there cannot be a solution.» (AP, May 26). After the Wahran meeting, the Iraqi News Agency reported that a statement delivered by Iraqi foreign ministry's spokesman said «if cutting off arms deliveries to Lebanon could help the three-man committee, Iraq would declare its full adherence to that.» However he stipulated «not to exploit these circumstances by the Syrian government and its allies... the committee has to move quickly to ensure a cease-fire, reopening crossings and lifting blockades.» The committee also has «to be firm towards any party impeding the steps needed to achieve peace and security in Lebanon, or trying to sabotage national reconciliation,» added the spokesman. (*Al Nahar*, July 3)

US ROLE

In a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, US President George Bush stated that the committee was «met with strong, enthusiastic support from the United States, as it tries to be helpful in bringing peace to Lebanon. That's something we're very much concerned about.» (AP, June 15)

The US government has now found it useful to pretend that it is very much concerned about the unsettled Lebanese crisis, and has declared that peace in Lebanon is a vital goal of US foreign policy. However, the falseness of US claims is revealed by the words and deeds of many US officials.

The advertised «strong, enthusiastic support» manifests itself in the recent statements of US ambassador to Lebanon John McCarthy saying that President Bush's administration was «discouraged by Syria's failure to enter into a dialogue with Aoun. The Syrians and certainly the Lebanese

Moslems should be holding dialogues with the general rather than criticizing him. One of our positions towards the Syrians has been that General Aoun certainly represents an important current of public opinion and political influence in Lebanon.» (AP, May 31)

It seems that the US administration has been disappointed by the outcome of the Arab summit, since the US hoped it would be an Arab siege aiming to isolate and weaken Syria and the nationalist forces. This dissatisfaction emerges as a result of the Arab emphasis on the priorities of reform, elections and withdrawals, and the necessity of the Israeli withdrawal as a precondition to resolving the Lebanese crisis. So directly or indirectly the US government encourages Aoun and the isolationist forces in escalating the situation and torpedoing the efforts of the three-man committee to resolve the crisis.

Pursuing its line in respect to Israel, the US government overlooks that it is thereby giving Tel Aviv a chance to continue its aggression and consolidate its hold on the occupied Lebanese territory. Washington apparently follows the traditional principle of its Middle East policy: What is good for Israel, is bound to be good for the United States. It is a continuation of the old policy based on the desire for Arab surrender and to protect the interests of Israel. From the US point-of-view, it is necessary to bring the Arab countries to their knees and to force them to accept a settlement on Israel's terms. Accordingly, Lebanon is a proper arena to achieve such an aim.

THE ISRAELI DESTRUCTIVE ROLE

Much has been said about the internal factors that led to the armed clashes in Lebanon. It is obvious that no matter how such internal contradictions exist in this Arab country, and not even the Syrian presence could lead to such tragic consequences, if there were not foreign forces that stood behind the Lebanese crisis, primarily Israel which is very concerned with escalating conflicts between factions in Lebanon.

The ruling circles in Israel were the biggest winners from the bloodshed in Lebanon. The facts that prove Israel's

fear of normalizing the situation in Lebanon are numerous.

While efforts are being exerted towards achieving stability in Lebanon, Israel starts to bombard Lebanese towns and Palestinian refugee camps in order to further escalate tensions and bring this country back to the tragic and sad situation that has prevailed since 1975. It is not mere chance that the constant Israeli attacks on June 1st and 2nd, against Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon coincide with the convening of the Arab summit and later taking decisions related to resolving the Lebanese crisis. Undoubtedly, Israel wants to dispatch a direct message in the form of Israeli planes, gun-boats and explosions of mortar fire. Then Israel will not permit the three-man committee to normalize the Lebanon situation without taking its (Israel's) interests into consideration. So it will carry on its ugly practices until the Arabs define two things. The first is connected with guaranteeing the security of «its northern borders» with Lebanon, the second is to force the Arab summit to recognize «Israel's vital interests» in Lebanon and to create an Arab conception which opposes total domination of nationalist and progressive forces because they will threaten its security.

«Syria knows our positions... it is also fully aware that we have legitimate interests in Lebanon,» said Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (*Al Safir*, June 3) This statement is one of many examples which shows the destructive role which Israel plays not only in Lebanon, but in the Middle East as a whole.

The role of Israel in the Lebanese events is quite clear. Therefore, what has to be done to stabilize the Lebanese situation and resolve its crisis is to put an end to the Israeli occupation which is a central problem due to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its essence the Palestinian cause. This complication has created an impression about the incapability of the Arab League to resolve the Lebanese crisis, since the three-man committee doesn't have the ability to force Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, although it does represent the maximum that the Arab League can do. ●