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*Assad's War
Against Peace*

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

Lovers of peace throughout the world are nervous about the possibility of war growing out of the concentration of troops in and near Lebanon's Bekaa valley.

Israel, having suffered heavy casualties in efforts to end PLO incursions from southern Lebanon, has 25,000 armed forces on hand; PLO armed forces in the region number perhaps 10,000; and Syria tops the list with 35,000.

If the loaded gun goes off, the world will be right in putting most blame on President Hafez el-Assad of Syria.

Assad, who has held the reins of government with a firm grip since 1971, distrusts just about everybody but himself. In partnership with Syria's security and military forces who brought him to power, he is the authoritarian ruler of a nation with a constitution which ironically asserts the government is a "representative democracy."

Syria, which has long desired to swallow up huge chunks, if not all, of Lebanon and thus create a Greater Syria for Assad, went into Lebanon eight years ago to try to end the civil war. Since then, its forces in Lebanon have made a mockery of human rights agreements. Meanwhile, Syrian-trained terrorists have engaged in political killings well outside of Damascus.

The 4500 Jews remaining in Syria have seen many of their fellow Jews suffer harassment, pillage, imprisonment, and execution. This was a proud Jewish community claiming roots in Syria since the days of the Second Temple, a community that numbered 45,000 in 1947. Many Jews would like to emigrate but are denied exit. Assad holds them hostage while praying for Israel to cave in and appealing to Moscow for more military equipment with greater destructive power.

President Reagan has urged Assad to lower the cries for war in the Bekaa valley. One leak has it that he has even hinted that the Golan Heights, wrested from Syria by Israel in the fierce fighting of 1967, might be restored to Syria. But much as the Syrian iron man would like that so that he could again kill Israelis at will, he won't even let the American trouble-shooter, Philip Habib, into his country.

The Middle East has had a long line of powerful obstructionists, spoilers and foes of peace; but Assad's record is among the worst. He threatens to close Syria's border to Lebanon to force Beirut to grant the PLO special privileges. He renews threats to impose sanctions on Lebanon. When Egypt's martyred leader, Anwar Sadat, made his historic trip to Jerusalem in 1977, he was motivated in part by Assad's intransigence. In the ongoing battle between Iraq and Iran, Assad courts continuing favor with the Ayatollah, largely because he thrives for Iranian oil. He blames the United States for Israel's 1982 thrust into Lebanon in pursuit of Yasir Arafat with whom Assad has had a love-hate relationship. He swears he will never withdraw his armies from Lebanon as long as Amin Gemayel heads that nation's government.
With the most of the resolve at his command,



and with new weaponry supplied by Moscow, he vows to crush Israel. In the eyes of Syria's bellicose prime minister, Abdul Rauf al-Kasm, Israel is the Arab world's enemy Number 1, a "racist entity" to be best compared with the Nazi Germany. (That was the Germany that Syria hesitated to declare war against until shortly before the Nazis capitulated in the spring of 1945).

Having sent more than 5000 "advisers" into the Bekaa Valley to help man the powerful SAM-5 missiles, the USSR seeks to want Syria to open fire against Israel. "Seems to want" is a careful choice of words. Moscow remembers the

beating its aircraft previously supplied to Syria took from Israel last year. Moscow knows also that military experts continue to believe Israel can defeat any martial combination in the Middle East today.

But there's always that itch to finish Israel off. Andropov, who moves faster than Brezhnev did, might take a chance against a second defeat. And Assad, figuring that Washington is too preoccupied with Latin America to give Israel much more backing, would like nothing better than to emerge as the Arab hero who brought Jerusalem down in flames.

There can be no doubt that the signing of the Agreement, to be registered here at the UN in conformity with Article 102 of the Charter, constitutes a great victory for Prime Minister Menachem Begin and his Likud party. It is a direct outcome of the "Peace for Galilee" operation which wiped out the murderous military grip the PLO had on Lebanon. Time will tell whether Lebanon will be strong enough to fulfill its obligations.

The historic signing of the Agreement fulfills a hope Mr. Begin had long held in his heart, namely, a Middle East Crescent at peace, linking Egypt, Israel and Lebanon together at long last as a stabilizing force in that troublesome part of the world.

That the Agreement, initialed at Israel's famous sea-coast resort city of Netania -- where this writer happened to be during the initialing Sunday May 15 as the guest of corres-

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Behind The Scenes

At The United Nations

By David Horowitz

A World-Union Press Feature

*Agreement Great
Victory For Begin*

UNITED NATIONS (WUP) -- Judging by basic clauses contained in the official text of the Lebanese-Israeli troop withdrawal Agreement, ratified by both Parliaments last week, a real peace with Lebanon appears in the offing.

King of One Liners



HENNY YOUNGMAN
...Man of Many Talents.

TWO GUYS IN THE INDUSTRY WERE HAVING LUNCH TOGETHER.
ONE GUY SAYS, "OYE."
THE OTHER ONE SAYS, "YOU'RE TELLING ME!"

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth
Constitutes A Majority"

(Continued from page 1)

three-day, expense-paid trip to New York and a portrait of the winner to be done by artist Leroy Neiman in his studio there. Second and third prizes were Lithographs by Leroy Neiman, won by Milton Schwartz and Rivka Lagstein, respectively, and donated by Leonard and Sunny Rosen. Fourth prize was a woman's gold watch, won by Nat Benderson, and donated by Mordechai and Vicki Yerushalmi, of The Jewelers.

Friends of the Hebrew Academy thanks other raffish project organizers Ada Cohen - fundraising chairman, Carolyn Goodman, Geri Rentchler, Gertrude Rudiak, Vicki Yerushalmi, and Sandy Raymond. The community support for the children and the future of Hebrew Academy is exciting as we embark on these progressive changes.