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## Middle East

### ISRAEL 20

Likud party leader Menahem Begin has apparently made little progress so far toward formation of a broadly-based



Menahem Begin

government. Talks continue with the Democratic Movement for Change, but the Movement reportedly has adopted a strategy of delay, hoping a strong showing in Labor Federation elections later this month will improve its bargaining position.

A major split has developed among Movement leaders over whether to join a government dominated by the rightist Likud, adding further uncertainty to the outcome of talks. Those favoring participation argue that the Movement can carry out its commitment to reform and can moderate Likud's hard-line stance on peace negotiations only by joining in the government. Control of ministries, they contend, would also allow the Movement to use patronage to strengthen the party's grassroots support.

Other Movement members argue that differences with Likud, especially over Middle East peace negotiations, are irreconcilable. They believe the Movement should join with the defeated Labor Alignment and other parties expected to be in opposition to work for the fall of a Likud-led coalition. Without either Labor or the Democratic Movement, such a coalition would hold, at best, only a razor-thin majority in the Knesset.

Even party leaders who otherwise favor joining Begin's coalition are concerned that the Movement's flexibility on negotiations with the Arabs would be given scant consideration should the new government's most important posts be held by hard-liners like Begin, Moshe Dayan, and Ezer Weizman, Begin's nominee for defense minister. Many Movement leaders interpret Begin's failure to consult with the Movement before offering Dayan the foreign ministry portfolio as evidence that Begin would run a future coalition in the same autocratic manner he runs Likud.

Movement leader Yigael Yadin believes that Begin's inability to secure a comfortable working majority in parliament without the Movement gives it an advantage in its coalition bargaining and strengthens Yadin's claim on the post of foreign minister.

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