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2 March 1981

... FBIS 40TH YEAR 1941-81 ...

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 9/81)

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Washington, D. C. 20013

26 February 1981

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On behalf of all of us in FBIS I wish to express appreciation to our readers who have guided our efforts throughout the years.

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

RESULTS OF ARAB PEOPLE'S CONGRESS DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 23-29 Jan 81 pp 28-29

[Article: "Arab People's Congress Is Convened in the Name of Nasirism in the Absence of Nasirists: Independence of the Arab Will is Central Point in Dispute; 'Abd-al-Majid Farid Says, 'Alliance Between Libyans and Communists Suspended the Historic Role of the Congress' "]

[Text] The second session of the Arab People's Congress that was held in Tripoli on 15, 16 and 17 January coincided with the anniversary of 'Abd-al-Nasir's birthday. There was a major contradiction about convening this congress: Nasirists were absent from it. The chairman of the congress himself, who is a Nasirist, was absent from it because he had not been invited. What is going on inside the Arab People's Congress? Has it turned into a new alliance to be added to the existing Arab alliances?

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI asked congress president Mr 'Abd-al-Majid Farid about the reason for his absence. He said, "I was elected congress president in 1977 at the first session of the congress that was held after al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. I was truly hoping that this congress would accurately express the wishes of the Arab forces in opposing the new forms of the Israeli aggression and not turn into, as it has unfortunately, a narrow, regional, self-created partisan bloc."

He added, "The representatives of the 140 Arab organizations and parties who elected me undoubtedly share my surprise that the second session of the congress should convene without inviting me to attend even though the official Libyan agency did spread the news that this session was taking place with the presence and participation of all the founders."

Mr Farid explained, "There is a lateral alliance between the secretary general of the congress, Mr 'Umar al-Hamidi, who extended the invitation, and one of the Egyptian communist parties--the Egyptian Communist Party--which is located in Paris. This is the alliance that blocked my invitation. I regret that the Nasirists were not invited to the conference on the anniversary of 'Abd-al-Nasir's birthday. It seems to me that I am one of the closest people to Nasirism.

"Did you exercise your authority as congress president in the first session?"

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"In the first session hearts were open, intentions were sincere and directions were clear. Today, however, the matter is different."

"How do you see the future of the congress?"

"The organization of the congress must be reconsidered on the basis of restoring representation to the national forces so that they can embark upon an effective strategy that utilizes creative dialogue and group participation. The congress should not be founded on local blocs because it would thus forfeit its historical role."

"Who were those who did not participate in the second session?"

"I don't know exactly, but Mr Ahmad 'Abbas Salih--a non-communist Egyptian writer--did withdraw and so did 'Abd-al-Mun'im Ghazalah--from an Egyptian communist group --after the Iraqi delegation withdrew from the general secretariat session in Aden."

"Are you prepared to participate in an alternative Arab front?"

"I am prepared to work within any proper Arab organization which represents all the national forces."

Who Is Responsible?

The deliberate act of "pushing aside" the president of the Arab People's Congrss from the presidency after 3 years of his first session raises more than one question. Why does the congress limit the representation of the Egyptian opposition to a communist group and excludes other national forces? Has the congress become a tool of circumstantial action after it was supposed to become a pan-Arab organization with a clear constitution, bylaws and an agenda? Who is responsible for suspending the role of the congress with these unilateral practices?

After the visit of Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat to Jerusalem, the anger was universal among the regimes and among the people in the Arab homeland. This anger had to manifest itself in purposeful action.

When the representatives of the various opposing forces met in Tripoli, the meeting was not merely a political meeting. It was a historic, political and popular mobilization of all the organizations and the active forces in the Arab homeland to affirm the Arab right in Palestine. The confrontation assumed a pan-Arab character in the light of a clear conviction that it was necessary to establish a popular front that was aware and that would rise above the traditional conflicts to correct the formidable negative consequences of al-Sadat's choices.

The first indicators of al-Sadat's deviation had appeared in the Sinai agreements. Lebanon had paid the price for those agreements in continuous disturbances, and it soon turned into a test field and a battleground for the feuding forces. But it was the visit to Jerusalem followed by the Camp David Accords that constituted the serious shift in Arab relations with Israel, and opposing that shift was an urgent matter that was not to be postponed.

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Interest in the Egyptian Delegation

And so the representatives of the national parties and forces and the popular groups met in Tripoli. There was special interest in those who were representing Egypt from inside Egypt because ultimately the confrontation was with the Egyptian regime. What was required was the mobilization and the support of the Egyptian forces in this mission. From the first moment it seemed that the Egyptians were to have a distinguished role in the conference because preparations began for al-Sadat's trial—the trial did take place some months later in Tripoli and Baghdad--and for proceeding from that trial to a universal popular action to oppose the conspiracy that had not only targeted the rights of the Palestinian people, but also the history and the civilization of a whole nation.

However, the reassurance that was brought about by the fact that all the various groups of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement were represented--Nasirists, progressive members and communists with various inclinations--did not last long. After the first sessions of the congress a few Egyptian communists tried to gain control of the secretariat general and to limit the representation of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement to themselves, thereby excluding the others because the others in their opinion "were tied to existing Arab regimes, most of which negotiate." Observers noted that this communist attempt was relying on outside support represented by the leftist delegations that were taking part in the congress. These delegations were European, Asian, American and Latin American. Following the unilateral practices of the secretary general of the congress, the delegations had met with Mr 'Umar al-Hamidi, who is a Libyan citizen. This led many congress participants, and the Iraqi delegation was among them, to caution that the congress was not linked to the policy of a specific country or to a specific ideology and that, therefore, if such a link did exist, it had to be eliminated so that the historic role and the effectiveness of the congress can be preserved.

Broad Debate

This position that was assumed by a few Egyptian communists aroused broad debate within the congress. In general, most of the participants do not attribute to the communist parties the characteristic of national struggle. Accordingly, they do not consider them advanced in this struggle. The Egyptian communists, for example, do not acknowledge the 23 July Revolution [as a revolution]. They describe it as no more than a military operation that enabled the military to gain power in Egypt. The history of some Arab communist parties provides more than one piece of evidence that they have had dealings with Israel.

This debate soon turned into a kind of struggle between two points of view within the secretariat general of the congress. There were two different positions and trends. One trend wanted to confine the confrontation with al-Sadat to those regimes that are described as progressive, and the other trend tried and is trying to form a comprehensive pan-Arab front that would bring about the isolation of the Egyptian president from the Arabs and the international community. Whereas the Libyan Jamahiriyah sided with the communists on the basis of the fact that the battle was a progressive battle against Arab reactionaries--and there is more than enough revolutionary obtrusiveness in this position--the other opinion, which

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stated that what was required first and foremost was the formation of a strong Arab front regardless of the difference among the regimes, was victorious. This was the view that was later expressed at the 1979 Baghdad Summit; afterwards, the boycott yielded its obvious results.

Thus the opinion was advanced stating that an emotional decision that is satisfied with proclaiming slogans will not yield the results that are hoped for. Even though it may satisfy feelings temporarily, it is unlike the position that hardens on substance but is flexible in style, thereby achieving its objectives without having to negotiate on fundamental principles.

The Tacit Alliance

As the business of the congress progressed, a few facts began to take shape and to reveal a tacit alliance between Libya and the Egyptian communists. When the communist campaign against Iraq intensified, the communists asked that the Socialist Arab Ba'th party be removed from the congress. The Libyans encouraged this request. Mr 'Umar al-Hamidi, the secretary general of the congress claimed he was independent of the Libyan regime, even though his conduct and all his positions supported [the notion] that he was closely tied to the Libyan decision. At the same time Tripoli, without asking anyone, claimed the leadership role of the entire Arab nation for itself. Thus the congress began to shift from [being a forum] for expressing an Arab position, united in solidarity to [being a forum] for expressing Libyan ambitions that were far from being realistic.

Cases of misunderstnndings accumulated and [eventually] led to what resembled an explosion. When the permanent secretariat of the congress met in Aden in 1979, there was a dispute about the basic rules regarding the representation of Arab communist parties. It was said then, "Originally there was a decision to delegate this task to the Sudanese communist party." When Iraq's delegation objected to that decision and asked that the basic rules be utilized in such a representation, this objection sparked an emotional campaign against Iraq that forced it to withdraw from the session. It seemed to the conference participants that day that the Libyan-Syrian alliance had had an immediate effect on Libya's permanent bias in the secretariat general of the congress towards the side opposing Iraq.

The non-communist representatives of the Egyptian National Movement withdrew from the congress before Iraq, and Egyptian representation was confined to one of the groups of the communist party and a few leftists. This enabled those communists to direct the congress and its resolutions. And once again the deep conflict emerged between some Arab communists, who hide behind the Soviet Union to achieve their own interests, and the progressive Arab position that proclaims Arab-Soviet friendship without using that friendship for local objectives and without (turning that friendship] into total subordination.

Differences of Principle

To continue [this account] the withdrawal of the representatives of the Egyptian National Movement and of the Iraqi delegation emphasized the existing differences between the groups of the Arab revolution that have a pan-Arab orientation and

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some Arab communists, especially the Egyptians. Those communists were intent on invalidating the Arab struggles because they considered themselves the only fighters. Meanwhile, the Arab revolutionary movement was trying to distinguish itself from Marxism and was eschewing the class struggle in order to do away with the various differences in popular alliances. The Arab revolutionary movement is also concerned about the [divine] messages as sources of spiritual, intellectual and cultural enrichment; it does not subscribe to the materialistic interpretation that abolishes spirituality.

Once again it seemed that what united the Arab communists, or most of them with the Arab national forces was not more than what separated them. In the Arab revolutionary view the battle with Israel is a battle of survival or non-survival. That is, it is a battle between two cultures. According to the "new left" this battle is no more than a class war for achieving certain interests against all the Arab regimes. All the regimes here, including the Libyan regime, are equal in the eyes of the communists.

Regarding relations with the Soviet Union the Arab communists are trying to outbid others on the basis of erroneous assumptions while the Arab revolutionary movement is trying to reject both the Islamic reform movement and the communists so it can achieve a limited degree of social awareness and equal relations with both Moscow and Washington that would assure hhe independence of Arab will.

In the absence of "the other opinion" inside the congress, the secretary general arrogated to himself almost all the authorities and, with the participation of the Soviets, the congress turned into a class conference financed by Libya and used by it to serve its own positions. The other evidence for this lies in the fact that when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia brought (O.X.) airplanes to watch its air space, the secretariat general quickly held a meeting in Cyprus for the Progressive and National Forces in the Gulf and with the participation of leftist European forces took an unfair decision against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There is nothing to prevent this secretariat from meeting tomorrow to make a decision to support the Libyan invasion of African Chad because such support serves both the Soviet and the Libyan strategy. Naturally, the congress is not expected to support Iraq against Iran despite the fact that the Shah's Iran had waged war on Arab rights and despite the fact that Khomeyni's Iran waged war on Iraq and on every Arab regime. In addition, it adopted [the policy of] regional expansion which the Shah had called for and thereby added one more conflict to the Iranian-Arab conflicts.

Such positions of the Arab People's Congress shattered many hopes that the congress would be able to oppose al-Sadat's course with a clear program. The congress found itself torn between the logic of the state and that of the revolution and clearly subordinate to Libyan wishes and then to the clear control of a communist group in the secretariat which the Libyan regime is tolerating temporarily even though it ultimately does not agree with its Islamic slogans.

Far from the goals for which it was founded and far from the basic rules that had been endorsed, the congress continues without a constitution, without legitimate status, without an agenda and without clear objectives, unless those sporadic

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proposals that are presented in the manner of Col Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi constitute an agenda.

Because the invitations that are sent by the secretariat general of the congress go through the Libyan embassies abroad, the congress has forfeited its last forms of independence. It has become preoccupied with supporting Libya against the others. Such a tendency in itself makes the congress a circumstantial case for a circumstantial action and nothing more than a tool through which Tripoli practices its own brand of revolution. However, what is required is that this congress become the means for a historical confrontation in one of the most cruel stages of history.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

REFLECTIONS ON ARAB DISUNITY, DIFFERENCES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 23-29 Jan 81 pp 16-18

[Article: "Reflections on the Psychological Reasons for Disputes and Divisions: The Tragedy of the Arab Political Character from the Age of 'Antar to That of al-Qadhdhafi"]

[Text] The parasitic radical trio in Damascus caused the 1967 defeat and the fall of the national wing of the regime in Egypt.

Arabs pay millions of dollars annually to American centers of education to have their own history re-written in a muddled way.

What is the key to understanding and explaining the mysterious, surrealistic painting of Arab political relations?

What is the true nature of this fragmentation and disunity that have been passed on from one generation to the other among countries, regimes, governments, rulers and leaders?

What is the secret behind this vehemence that characterizes our disputes and brings about a rapid change in the climate of relations, from hot to cold and then from cold to hot?

How can people who were friends yesterday easily become today's enemies? How can today's friends turn tomorrow into opponents and enemies killing each other?

Traditional politicians may have the answer to that question in this well-known statement: "There are no lasting hostilities or friendships in politics."

And the radicals may have the answer in this well-known, prepared cliche: "imperialism, colonialism, Zionism, reactionaries."

Both answers may be correct to a large extent. In politics "There are no lasting friendships; but there are lasting interests." And yes, no nation has been subjected to all the forms of colonialist abuse--in politics, in exploitation, in economics and in colonization--as the Arab nation has been and still is.

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But this sharp fragmentation; this excessive exchange of accusations and characterizations; this hidden and blatant deception that is forcing relations to the point of armed combat; and this division in opinion on crucial issues--such as the position on the Iraq-Iran war, for example, which is dividing the Arabs into two groups: Arab-supporting Arabs who are with Iraq, and non-Arab-supporting Arabs who are with Iran--are matters that are neither ordinary nor normal among fraternal states and regimes that govern a nation whose citizens share a common history, a common language, common blood and a common religion.

And if imperialism and colonialism had in the past imposed their occupation or their direct mandate on the Arabs and tried to break up their ranks, it must also be acknowledged with a great deal of courage and responsibility that these forces have lost much of their authority, their control, their effective forces and their operative and effective tools. There is thus no longer any reasonable justification for saying that they are still the cause and the origin of every dispute, every fight or every break-up.

Attentive Arab public opinion that used to accept in the past the statement, "Look for the British," whenever a catastrophe befell the Arabs, is today not convinced that everything that takes place on the surface and beneath the surface of Arab policy is the work of the Americans, the Soviets or the Zionists. Arab public opinion [accepts the fact]--with considerable courage and responsibility also--that such things are done, arranged and planned by Arabs. Foreign powers come into the picture later to take advantage of this fragmentation and division.

The subject of this discussion is not to impeach the regimes and the non-regimes for the state of deterioration to which Arab relations have sunk. But the objective of this study is simply to look for the key to the riddle, the riddle of the chronic Arab disease. This is the riddle of accelerating divisions in the Arab political structure; it is the riddle of the distribution and effusiveness of these divisions into this astounding number of opinions, positions and points of view along with all the accompanying interventions and contradictions between them and the ensuing tension, depletion and waste of effort and energies.

As is the case in every disease, an analysis [of the case] is essential to find out the reasons for the disease. We must thus go back to the distant past in our investigation of this perplexing riddle of the continuous Arab divisions, and we must look for the psychological roots of the Arab character.

The Historical Features of the Arab Character

Factors of psychological stability, self-assurance and an interval of time have not been available to the Arab character throughout history to allow it to become settled and established on a broad, firm foundation of maturity. The Arab character has retained in its unconscious many of its pre-Islamic features: it naively accepts objects and events with their defects without much careful examination; it becomes excessively moved by the appearances of these objects and events to the point of appearing to be over-sensitive. This over-sensitivity sometimes reaches the point of a turbulent emotional outburst that sweeps everything around it. Other times the Arab character descends to the lowest level of a rigid and an

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inflexible surrender to fate, or it resorts to an attitude of individualism or one of independent tribalism that is deep-rooted. Such an attitude refuses to yield to public wishes; it clashes with them and contradicts them.

The advent of Islam was a historic opportunity for uniting the Arabs and for modifying and refining their character. The character of the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him salvation, was a model of maturity and mental stability. The fact that he sought divine inspiration before making his decision on crucial questions was a practical expression of the fact that he relied on the decree of reason and wisdom which constitutes the wishes and the wisdom of God.

The Arabs rallied around the banner of Islam, and they became preoccupied during the dawn and the early period of Islam with conquests. The short period of the Umayyad age in Syria, during which Arabs were utilized in government and management, was not long enough for the process of fusion that had begun with the early days of Islam. The Umayyad age did not last long enough to dissolve the sensitivities and the traditions and prepare the climate that was necessary for crystallizing public feelings and the distinctive, independent Arab character.

A worse catastrophe befell the Arabs when government shifted gradually from their hands to the hands of non-Arabs who were Persians, Turks or Mamelukes. All those persecuted the ethnic Arabs: they repressed authentic Arab sentiments; and then they held back the Arabs with the various disjointed nations of the Islamic nation in a repository of backwardness for hundreds of years. During that harsh and gloomy period with all the civil strife, insurrections, invasions, wars, tyranny and persecution that accompanied it, it was also impossible for the Arab character to have the means for its formation, its growth, its awareness, its maturity and its stability.

During the new Arab Renaissance at the end of the 19th century the national feelings of the Arabs assumed the form of transparent emotional, spontaneous sentiments that characterized the course of their liberation from the Turks and then the course of the struggle against all forms of European colonialism: occupation, colonization or mandate.

This sentimental romanticism was necessary to kindle the feelings of struggle and to stimulate and direct the power of the masses to act. However, this sentimental romanticism also kept the national Arab character a prisoner of impassioned emotions and of an extreme individualism and a pure subjectivism that accompany all these chivalrous phenomena. [This situation] manifested itself in the separation and fragmentation of those who were working in the national arena. Consequently, the national struggle movements found themselves incapable of unifying themselves.

Thus, serious attempts to philosophize the Arab nationalist movement and to liberate it from its emotional context were delayed until the first half of this century. The teachings and the ideas of the intellectual elite of the early Ba'thists as well as the written works of the nationalist thinkers sought to formulate a general theory of Arab nationalism on firm and stable scientific foundations and to make Arabs of all ages aware of it.

This ideological effort came late, but it was the only means for giving the Arab characther its form, its distinguishing features, its national proportions and its

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humanist mission. It was the only means for defining its political and national goals and for liberating it from the individualism, the division and the fragmentation that had tainted the early struggle.

In theory, this was the goal of scientific national thought, but in practice, the previous negative factors remained in control [of the situation] for reasons beyond the control of the nationalist thinkers. This is because the political circumstances that prevailed in the forties and in the fifties did not provide them with the full opportunity for enriching the nationalist body of ideas with serious scientific works in this area and then spreading these ideas all over the Arab homeland.

This intellectual elite was able to send from Damascus and Beirut glimpses of their new scientific ideas with a generation of young people from the Arab east who studied in the two capitals. But these glimpses did not penetrate the Arab soul. In Egypt and Sudan they were pale or they arrived late. They were scattered with the sand and did not penetrate the colonialist barriers and psychological roadblocks to reach the young, educated and intellectual generations in the countries of the great Arab Maghreb.

This failure or interruption [in the effort to] spread nationalist ideas throughout the greater homeland was accompanied by the involvement of the nationalist thinkers themselves, willingly or unwillingly, in the fury of political and popular action. This was enough to distract them from their intellectual effort and to create for them political and personal animosities in the ranks of government and in the ranks of the traditional opposition. Then came the dispute and the struggle between the national political leaders--or to put it more candidly, between the Ba'thists and the Nasirists--with which everybody was preoccupied for relatively many years that were actually lost from the life of the educational period of scientific nationalism.

Marxist Attempts To Contain the Nationalist Message

The principal factors that exposed the scientific nationalist ideas and [eventually] mutilated those ideas were not only the subversive elements of the nationalist movements. Nationalist ideas were also subjected to a poisoned lateral process of erosion and mutilation.

In the early fifties nationalist ideas became infused with Marxist ideas, and there were serious attempts to implant the Marxist analytical scientific method into the nationalist theory. This may be acceptable inasmuch as Marxism is almost the only ideology that offers an integrative, rational method for analyzing and viewing the course of human societies.

These limited attempts, however, soon turned to a deliberate tendency to favor Marxism over nationalism under progressive and radical revolutionary slogans. These attempts reached their peak when the parasitic radicals gained control of the Ba'th Party and the government in Syria. This happened after the coup of 23 February 1966 and the removal of the nationalist leadership from power.

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This period was truly a gloomy period in the history of nationalist action. The deflection of the nationalist course in Syria was accompanied by the fall of the party in Iraq into the shackles of formalism. It was this that forced Michel 'Aflaq, the founder of the party, to make his famous proclamation as he left Damascus, "I am innocent of this party!" Then the disaster befell all the Arabs when the trio of Jadid, al-'Atasi and Za'in prepared the suitable conditions for Israel to attack the Arabs before they were adequately prepared and while they were waiting for the Soviets to intervene--something the Soviets never did. The immediate result of the defeat was the loss of the Golan, the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai. Then, the nationalist course of the regime in Egypt fell and Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, subdued and griefstruck, died shortly afterwards.

Attempts to give Marxism the upperhand over nationalism have now regressed with the Ba'th party correcting its course and regaining power in Iraq under the leadership of Saddam Husayn. However, local communists in the Arab east, supported by Marxist factions in Arab movements, are still trying to implant Marxism into the theory and the practice of the Arab [nationalist] appeal. They are trying to enlist Arab nationalism into the political service of Soviet strategy in the Middle East and to portray it to the young generations as a chauvinistic or a reactionary message whose time has passed.

The danger still stands. The conspiracy against the nationalist movement developed into an alliance between the eastern communists, the Marxists and the sectarian faction which surfaced in the government in Syria and in the termperamental regime in Libya as an Arab cover-up of the Shu'ubiyah [translator's note: a movement among nations in the early days of Islam that refused to acknowledge the privileged position of the Arabs] Persian attack on the nationalist regime in Iraq.

The fact that al-Sadat's Egypt renounced the nationalist course and allied itself with Zionism, which advocates the creation of sectarian and denominational entities in the area, was tantamount to a stab in the back of the Arab movement.

Then came the Lebanese war with all its terrors, its massacres and its mistakes, and the Arab factions became involved in it. It was a golden opportunity for the Maronite right to disassociate itself from everything that linked it with the area, to turn towards "the good neighbor" and to hold the Arab movement responsible for what happened in Lebanon.

At the same time increasingly determined obscure and clandestine attempts were underway to stimulate and to arouse religious and sectarian feelings and to turn them against the nationalist tide by claiming that Arabism was incompatible and at odds with religion.

This unscheduled encounter between Marxism and sectarian trends to fight the appeal for nationalism shows the extent of the prejudice with which the Arabs are afflicted. Sometimes under the cover of internationalism and other times under the [guise] of religious slogans, the Arabs were forbidden from thinking about or striving to achieve their national unity. It is curious and amazing indeed that the religious regime in Iran maintains its natural unity which includes five distinct nations, while the Ayatollah forbids the Arabs from forming a single nation under the pretext that this would be incompatible with Islam.

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The international polarization in the area will [eventually] eliminate the distance that separates what is white from what is black. Although the United States and the Soviet Union are approaching a confrontation at the gateways to the area and around the area, both want the local regimes to revolve in this or the other orbit. It is self-evident that Washington and Moscow would resist the Arab nationalist trend that adheres to its independence and its freedom of action.

We can deduce from all this that the nature of the struggle in which the nationalist movement is engaged has prevented and is preventing it from devoting its attention to the [process of] crystallizing the Arab character and reshaping it so that it would have psychological stability, a firm will, rational thinking and an ability to make a rational analysis and to see things realistically.

The Official Patriarchal Theory of Public Opinion

It is perhaps distressing that the official media policy deals with Arab public opinion from a patriarchal perspective that views it not as a sound and healthy child, but rather as a retarded or a naive human being. Public opinion is fed general, prepackaged information that is trivial or superficial; it makes the public vulnerable to confusion and leaves it a prey to [sundry] interpretations and rumors. This official media policy robs the public of the ability to make analogies, to analyze, to distinguish, to make judgments and to explore. Not only is Arab public opinion deprived of pursuing the intellectual output of the countries of its own homeland, but it is also sheltered from human knowledge if that knowledge is not consistent with the standards of the narrow view of the censorship imposed by the state on the media, on ideas, knowledge, culture and education.

This effort to keep Arab public opinion in the dark under the pretext of protecting it and preserving its innocence has afflicted the Arab character with stupidity and frailty. It has caused the Arab character to lose its balance and its cohesion in front of the rush of events and the succession of defeats and disasters.

This intellectual confinement of the Arab character was often accompanied by psychological terror and physical repression. As a result, the Arab character lost any experience [it may have had] in practical political practice, and this practice came to be governed by controls that were imposed by the security agencies or by the party that was in power. Such practices were confined to demonstrating to welcome a guest of the regime, cheering for a leader who escaped an assassination attempt or invading and burning an embassy.

The psychological terror and the physical repression spread despair, disappointment and bitterness in the Arab character and imparted to the Arab movement, to its thought and to its conduct a fatalistic, pessimistic or submissive character.

The deep split in the Arab character may be probed if these new "acquisitions" were added to the pile of inherited and ancestral traits that have already been mentioned: excessive emotionalism and sensitivity, a tendency to exaggerate and to engage in excessive abstractions; an inclination to passive individualism; and an unruly desire to be petulant and quarrelsome.

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Perhaps one of the most significant consequences of these traits, acquisitions and restrictions is the fact that the Arab character lost its ability to deal on a daily basis with the political reality in its own homeland, on its borders and in the world. Thus the broad line on which the vast majority of public opinion can agree disappeared. It is such a broad line that provides the minimum of agreement [necessary] for assuming a position, making a decision or accepting an existing situation.

A political observer does not need much evidence to prove this. It is enough to say that the Arab regimes entered Palestine in 1948 without telling their people that inevitable defeat was awaiting them there because these regimes were incapable of opposing the international conspiracy, of providing the necessary military materiel, of organizing the Palestinian popular resistance movement and of establishing the minimum coordination between the operations of the armies.

The February regime in Syria did not have the courage to make a single statement criticizing itself for losing the Golan in the 1967 war. Nasir, meanwhile, rushed to a limited process of self-criticism. The Egyptian media, however, was preoccupied for several years with [the process of] philosophizing the defeat, coloring it with bright, radiant colors and turning it into a victory for Egyptian public opinion.

The world press abounds daily with scores of analyses about the military strength and the political positions of the two major international camps. These analyses convey the most precise figures and details about the number of strategic missiles --intercontinental and transoceanic--[the number of] tactical weapons--intermediate or short range--and the number of divisions and soldiers.

But can a single Arab journalist keep his head if he states that according to a field marshal, a general, a colonel or even a corporal the number of tanks or airplanes in an Arab army is so many tanks or so many airplanes?

Or rather can a single Arab journalist publish candidly and accurately the point of view that some officials in a regime or an organization have on one of the crucial questions?

Why is that? It is because we do not have the courage to face facts, and we do not like public opinion to have a picture that approximates these facts. This situation is closer to being self-decption or false pride and pomposity both on the part of the official and on the part of public opinion. Ultimately, it is one of the deep splits in the Arab psychology or character.

We had stated that the purpose of this discussion and this analysis was not to examine the conscience of others or to lay the responsibility on this regime or the other or on this or the other school of thought. The purpose of this discussion is rather to speak out and to declare frankly our flaws and our psychological and character weaknesses which leave their negative, worthless products on contemporary Arab political life.

And now, how do we go about rebuilding the Arab Character?

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Quite simply there is no potion, injection, magic elixir or even an incantation to remedy the frailty and the weakness of our political character that we suffer from.

Perhaps the simplest statement that can be made in this regard is that we must take the course that nations before us took to build their national unities, their cohesive political characters and their modern societies.

The process is quite complicated, and it is impossible for a journalist or a political commentator to summarize in a few lines or pages that course that a [particular] nation pursued to rebuild itself and its society.

This statement is not being made to avoid prescribing a remedy or to express despair of remedying an incurable case. Nor is it made to abandon the reader deliberately on the threshold of despair from a bitter political reality.

All that can be said as an introduction as we begin taking the right road towards rebuilding the Arab character is that our entire history must be re-written. This may be the key that will solve and resolve the riddle that surrounds our disturbed political relations and our capricious, sharply temperamental character that is out of step with the reality around it.

The process of writing the history of a nation is not easy, especially since a nation like the Arab nation has a long and a full political and cultural history. The true history is not that which is written by the writers and teachers of political regimes and then printed under the supervision of an "honorable" or a "discriminating" ministry of education. The true history is not that which is written by some of our ancient and modern historians with boastfulness, pride, empty exaggeration and [an effort to] cover-up the flaws and shortcomings and to beat about the bush regarding anything that is embarrassing or shameful.

Some of the Arab countries, including Libya, donate millions of dollars every year to educational institutions that are affiliated with universities and educational centers in the United States for the publication of studies and research about the various aspects of modern and ancient Arab history. Most of these studies contain political instruction that ultimately serves the interests of U.S. strategy. These studies usually concentrate on looking for the factors of separation, division and schizophrenia in the Arab character and Arab society more than they do on the factors and the causes for unity and harmony.

Perhaps the Arab countries can offer the Arab League a service if they helped it establish a unified and a neutral scientific center for writing Arab history. Arab countries could lend that center their best historians and their top intellectuals, their top sociologists and their top economists and provide them with an atmosphere of calm and freedom so they can carry out this glorious work.

But what will be the use of re-writing history?

The political and cultural heritage of the past constitute the solid foundation upon which any nation stands. It is from this foundation that a nation derives its

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psychological roots and the components of its intellectual and political character. Inasmuch as this past is written and presented truthfully and inasmuch as it is evident to the attentive eye with all its advantages and its blemishes, people will be capable of controlling their view of their present, their future and their issues, and they will be capable of focusing on those matters.

We have to accept beforehand that our history is not a series of miracles, glorious events and victories just as we have to accept that it is not a pile of refuse and a gloomy series of injustices and persecutions, as is claimed by some Shu'ubis, orientalists and "progressive" writers who focus on the dark side of [our] history and disregard its bright sides.

Re-introducing people to modern Arab history is not less important than re-writing ancient history. There are deliberate attempts to keep the new Arab generations in the dark about the history of the characteristics, the society, the masses and the circumstances of the modern Arab renaissance. What is even more offensive is that shameless aggression which is being perpetrated for narrow political and ideological objectives against the leaders and the notable men of modern Arab history to obscure their names, their actions and their roles.

The realities of modern history are not the exclusive property or possession of the government's narrow direction. It is shameful for a student or a university graduate of any Arab university to know nothing about the life and the role of Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi, 'Urabi, al-Kawakibi, Muhammad 'Abduh, Sa'd Zaghlul, 'Abd-al-Ghani al-'Arisi, Faris al-Khuri, 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Shahbandar, Mustafa al-Nahhas, Salah al-Sin al-Sabbagh, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and Kamal Junblat while bookstores on Arab sidewalks overflow with volumes by Stalin and books about the life of Lincoln, Castro and Guevara.

Reading ancient and modern history helps the generations fix the features of their psychological stability and helps them form and derive the features and characteristice of their intellectual, social and political character. It assists them in looking at the future with considerable assurance and tenacity; in confronting crucial as well as occasional questions with unexaggerated realism; in preparing themselves for relations and for dialogue [with others] and in accepting criticism as well as opposing and different opinions.

But is this everything [that is necessary] to rebuild the Arab political character?

No. This is merely getting hold of the key to the riddle--the riddle of the capricious, restless and unbalanced political Arab psyche.

It is not strange that the destiny of the Arab nation is controlled by figures such as al-Sadat, al-Qadhdhafi, al-Za'im or Qasim who do not have the means for psychological stability and who lack the profound ability to analyze and to perceive [matters]. [These two faculties] are based on a thorough knowledge of history, of the past and of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Arab nation. In their emotionalism these characters are still quite similar to the mythical characters of pre-Islamic days such as 'Antarah al-'Abasi and those like him.

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What is curious is that so far we have remained incapable of knowing one of the principal reasons for our moral and material defeats. It lies here: in our hearts, in ourselves and in the essence of our frail and non-tenacious character.

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U. S.-IRAN MEDIATION SEALS ALGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL STATUS

London AFRICA in English Feb 81 pp 21-22

[Article by John Howe]

[Text] THE role played by Algeria in the protracted negotiations for the release of America's embassy hostages in Iran, successfully concluded last month, will undoubtedly give President Chadli Bendjedid's Government some political credit in widely differing quarters. A supporter, with reservations, of the Islamic revolution in Iran, Algeria has never allowed its anti-imperialist stance, which can be quite strident, to interfere with its business dealings with the United States (mainly involving oil, gas and the equipment and technologies needed to handle them).

Chadli's men, like Boumedienne's before them, have proved able to confront embarrassing contradictions by dealing with each issue as it arose, and being slow to take sides. Thus, while applauding the overthrow of the Shah, they have been able to criticise some subsequent developments in Iran — and notably the seizure of 53 US diplomats as hostages — without opposing the revolution itself.

Similarly, the Algerians were able to agree that America had to answer for 25 years of the Shah's tyranny, and at the same time understand the danger posed to world peace by Iran's flouting of the most basic principle of diplomacy. Being on neither side, and intellectually a cut above the average, Algeria was acceptable to both parties.

The US-Iran mediation was not the first of its kind Algeria had conducted recently. It is believed that it played a similar role in the release of several hundred Libyan soldiers captured by the Tanzanians during the war which overthrew the Ugandan tyrant Idi Amin. Despite its alliance with Libya, concluded at Hassi-Messaoud in 1975 by Colonel Gaddafy and the late President Houari Boumedienne, Algiers was not disposed to follow Gaddafy into any kind of support for Amin whom it regarded as brutal and politically backward. Officially, the Algerian Government concurred with the views of President Nyerere and at the height of Uganda's war of liberation, it is believed, delivered a much-needed arms shipment to the Tanzanians. The goodwill thus earned put Algeria in a position to secure the swift release of the Libyan prisoners of war.

Embarrassing

The reasons for an alliance which has often proved embarrassing to the Algerians are evident enough. Algeria and Libya share a long desert border; both regimes are Islamic and are, or say they are, revolutionary and anti-imperialist; they are allies in OPEC and (in relation to the Middle East conflict) in the 'rejection front' opposed to the Egypt-Israel detente; both have military agreements with the Soviet Union, while their neighbours do not; Libya has helped supply and finance the war mounted against Moroccan occupying forces by

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Sahara's Polisario Front from bases in Algeria.

These factors all help to explain why the alliance still stands despite the knocks it has received from the Libyan side. There was no official reaction to Libya's attempt to implicate Algeria in the Gafsa insurrection in Tunisia. Algiers has refrained from commenting on various Libyan attempts to jolt the diplomatic progress of the Sahara conflict out of its groove. Gaddafy's recent comments on the Sahara Desert's Tuareg nomads, of whom many live in Algeria, can hardly have passed unnoticed by the Algerian Government. In each case, Algeria has been seriously annoyed, but has kept its annoyance to itself.

Libya's foray into Chad and the the beginning of January.
countries, is causing violent ripples in the OAU and all round Algeria's southern borders in Niger and Mali. Algiers has adopted a legalist stance, supporting the Lagos accords and favouring elections before any major policy shift — such as the fusion project — can be justified.

Despite the threat posed to stability in the region by Gaddafy's dubious ambitions, Algiers is still standing by the Hassi-Messaoud treaty which stipulates among other things that 'any threat to one revolution will be regarded as a threat to the other'.

More than anything else, this explains why the idea floated out of the lunatic end of Washington last month, that Egypt might be persuaded to invade Libya, is almost certainly a non-starter. It is true that (as Washington also said) the Libyan population is too small to support anything resembling real military strength. By itself, Libya could do little to stop Egypt's large and well-trained forces. Algeria's opposition, almost certainly means that the attempt will not be made. But when, as it inevitably will, Libya runs into trouble in Chad, Algeria will be called on to help clear up the mess.

Seal

The US-Iran mediation puts the seal on the international acceptability of Chadli's Government, which during the last year has made large strides in cementing relations with a Tunisia which must be regarded as being in political transition, and cleared away several of its outstanding disputes with France dating from the war of independence.

Morocco, too, with its war in the Sahara going extremely badly, has lately multiplied its approaches to Algeria in the hope of finding a workable solution to its dispute with the Polisario Front. Algiers of course maintains that it has no real quarrel with Morocco and is ready to mediate when Morocco is ready to recognize its adversaries.

Algeria is not without internal problems. The 'Arabisation' policy which caused widespread disorders a year ago is still causing trouble in a country some of whose inhabitants insists with perfect justice that there insist with perfect justice that they are not Arabs. Chadli's assertion a few months ago that there are now no political prisoners in the country was contradicted by the case of army officer-cadets jailed by a Blida court at th beginning of January.

Splits

Splits in the administration are discernible behind last year's Government reshuffles and Chadli's personal intervention to secure the release from close surveillance of former President Ahmed Ben Bella, some weeks after it had been ordered and announced. The economy continues to give cause for concern, one reason for the urgency with which SONATRACH is seeking upward revision of Liquefied natura gas prices.

Nevertheless on some levels Chadli's Government, like its predecessor, functions unusually well: the handling of the El Asnam earthquake, for example, contrasted with the chaos and corruption witnessed in other earthquake incidents in recent times (Nicaragua, Iran, Italy). In the diplomatic field this relative solidity of conduct gave Algeria the credibility to undertake the Iran mediation, and is the real reason for the advantages — if any — which may now be expected from its success. ■

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ALGERIA

LEADERS SEEK TO REDUCE DEPENDENCY ON OIL, GAS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 5 Jan 81 pp 21-22

[Article by Caroline Verhack: "Preserving Energy Independence"]

[Text] The negotiations that went on all summer and fall between Algiers and its European and American customers concerning the price of gas did not lead to the signing of new contracts on revised bases. However, positions clearly evolved on both sides in a matter of months.

With respect to France, first of all, the gradual resumption of deliveries, seriously slowed down for a time, lifted a major obstacle to discussions between the two countries and by July, Paris had agreed to pay $3.20 per million BTU (British thermal units; 1 million BTU = 252 thermal units) for Algerian GNL (liquefied natural gas) in advance.

In addition, while French Minister of Industry Giraud's visit to Algiers in October did not result in the conclusion of an agreement, it nevertheless opened the way by bringing negotiations out of the impasse and by laying the groundwork for new energy cooperation.

A delegation from the French Gas Company (GDF) once again went to the Algerian capital at the beginning of December for a work session. Today, a new and important step has been taken with France's acceptance of the principle of alining gas prices with oil prices, a principle on which Algeria is intransigent.

For its part, Algiers proposes to spread out this measure in time. "We have never said that we wanted parity overnight," said the Ministry of Energy's planning director Boussena. "We are for a gradual alinement of the price of gas with that of oil in order to spare consumers very abrupt increases." The two sides have now but to agree on the indexing formula, the choice of reference crudes and the length of the period of transition.

The Americans also went to Algiers and Paris several times to meet with their Algerian counterparts. Here, discussions seem tighter. It is known that the Americans suspended taking GNL deliveries at the Arzew plant, now shut down, in April. Washington is keeping the price of $4.47 per million BTU, paid for Canadian gas at the border, as its reference price.

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Gas Battle

It is obvious that the new increase in the crude oil reference prices decided upon in Bali (Indonesia) by the OPEC ministers of energy strengthens Algeria's position. After what will soon be a year of discussions, it is possible that negotiations will conclude with new contracts in the early months of 1981.

The signing of such contracts would come at a decisive time for Algeria, which considers the energy question sufficiently important to include it on the agenda of the current session of the Central Committee of the FLN. Presented by Belkacem Nabi, minister of energy and the petrochemical industries, to the various rank-and-file organizations of that country, the dossier defines the main lines of action on which Algeria's long-term energy policy will be based. They include the following, as outlined by Abdelhamid Brahimi, minister of planning and national development: conserving oil and oil derivatives through a gradual reduction in consumption; ensuring the reliability of the national supply through a program of management and conservation of existing deposits; continuing research efforts and the working of new deposits; and mobilizing new alternative sources of energy.

We know the essential place occupied by hydrocarbons as a source of financing for national development. The minister of energy emphasized recently that in 1981, 99 percent of all foreign exchange will come from the sale of oil and gas. In the 1981 Budget, royalties from oil represent 68 percent of all anticipated receipts, or 46 billion dinars.

Furthermore, in the face of the rapid evolution in internal energy needs, both domestic and industrial, Algeria is beginning to ask questions about means of avoiding imports for future energy supplies. Following independence, the country consumed a million tons of oil a year. In 1979, consumption amounted to the equivalent of 16 million tons. Estimated needs total the equivalent of 40 million tons of oil in the 1980's and 75 million by the year 2000. Since resources have been computed, priority will quite rightly be given to national supplies. While internal consumption now represents only 21 percent of production (equivalent tons of oil), this share should rise to 30 percent by 1990 and 77 percent by the year 2000.

Oil exports (47 million tons of oil yearly) have already begun to drop in volume. And yet, with 980 million tons of known reserves, the reign of oil should come to an end within 20 years.

On the other hand, gas reserves estimated to date amount to 3 trillion cubic meters and put Algeria in fourth place in the world, enough to assure the country of substantial income for many years provided that a fair price is paid, the Algerians say.

New Sources

This is why gas is being called upon to gradually take the place of oil, both with regard to export receipts and internal consumption. It is in fact estimated that by 1990, the respective portions of consumption of gas and oil will be 60 and 33 percent, compared with 44 and 48 percent at present.

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However, there can no longer be any question of undertaking costly gas processing facilities. The GNL 3 liquefaction plant that was to be built near its sisters at Arzew will not see the light of day. Furthermore, Algiers has just told German (Ruhrgas, Salzitter Ferngas) and Dutch (Gasunie) companies that contracts already concluded for the delivery of liquefied gas from GNL 3 will not be honored.

Algeria, which is moving toward the delivery of gas to Europe by means of gas pipelines being built toward Italy and perhaps Spain, is already seeking alternative sources of energy that will require the establishment of training programs.

"We must resolutely embark upon the mobilization of solar and nuclear energy resources," says Brahimi. Here again, the country has been richly endowed by nature. The Hoggar Mountain Range (in the far south) contains uranium deposits whose reserves total over 30,000 tons, according to estimates. Furthermore, the country's potential in solar, hydroelectric and even geothermal and wind energy is well known.

The Hoggar uranium deposits could begin to be worked by 1984-1985. There is also talk of an initial nuclear powerplant around 1990. At any rate, it will be recalled that a framework agreement was signed in April between the Algerian National Office of Scientific and Technical Research (ONAREST) and the French Atomic Energy Commission, according to which Algeria could order two research reactors from France. A study has also been undertaken for the construction of a nuclear study center at Ain Oussera (200 kilometers south of Algiers).

The planning minister has described nuclear power as a "concrete prospect" and envisages the use of solar power as a well-adapted source of energy for small areas.

How will Algeria manage to reduce its dependency on hydrocarbons as nearly the sole suppliers of foreign exchange? The question remains posed. Aside from a few agricultural products (wine, citrus fruits) and some raw materials, the country, which at the present time cannot meet its own needs in many sectors (grain, capital goods), would have a difficult time finding exportable surpluses other than oil and gas. According to Minister Brahimi, the Algerian economy will therefore have to reduce its degree of openness to foreign countries in the coming decade. The share of imports of goods and services at 1979 prices must gradually be reduced until it amounts to 27 percent of total resources in 1990, compared with 50 percent at the present time, the minister says.

This is a difficult challenge at a time when the country aspires to a higher standard of living. And yet, the national solidarity reflex that developed spontaneously at the time of the El-Asnam earthquake is an encouraging sign for Algerian leaders and planners, whose constant concern is both to ensure economic independence and meet the needs of their people.

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ALGERIA

FRANCE ACCUSED OF NOT HONORING AGREEMENT

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 5 Jan 81 p 25

[Text] On 18 September 1980, an exchange of letters between the Algerian and French governments was to put an end to the period of uncertainty concerning the regulation of the stay of Algerian residents in France.

The text signed by Lionel Stoleru, secretary of state in charge of immigrant workers, contained the following commitments: "Our two governments have agreed to cooperate closely, for a period of 3 years and 3 months beginning on 1 October 1980 and ending on 31 December 1983, in taking all measures aimed at permitting the *voluntary* (our emphasis) return and reintegration in Algeria of Algerian workers and their families under good conditions and respecting the free choice of those involved...."

What is now happening? Has the French Government applied the decisions it agreed to make? It would appear that it has not. In a letter to French deputies, SOS-Refoulement (46 Rue de Montreuil, 75011 Paris) outlines the difficulties and threats particularly affecting: "Algerian workers, whether or not they are employed, holding a residence certificate for 5 or 10 years and currently in possession of visiting receipts for 3 months and 1 year; handicapped or disabled Algerian workers; young Algerian men and women residing in France who wish to continue their studies or work after the age of 16; and merchants."

Regarding families, there is a manifest determination to deny Algerian workers the right to live with their wives and children.

Is there any need to cite the example of Malika, whose husband has been in France for 25 years and whose three children are French, turned down because the apartment is 17 square meters too small? Then there is Nouara, whose husband has been in France for 20 years, whose two children are French and who is carrying a third. They have been turned down because of "improper housing"!

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IRAQ

RIVAL IRANIAN FACTIONS SAID TO HAVE CAUSED WAR BETWEEN IRAQ, IRAN

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 23-29 Jan 81 pp 12-13

[Article by Tariq 'Aziz, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister: "Who Was Behind the War?"]

[Text] The other question that is being asked is this: who was behind this war? Who encouraged it, and in whose interests did it break out?

Some Arab and international circles are accusing Iraq of waging this war on behalf of U.S. imperialism for the purpose of putting an end to the Iranian Revolution and making it subject to the American plan.

We will not discuss this accusation at length because it is too insignificant [to deserve] discussion. Countries on the globe are like people in villages: each one of them is known for his conduct, his demeanor and his affiliation. The shameless among them is known; the one who sells his honor is known; the rational is known; and the honest is known. When one of them is accused of something, the honorable and the wise residents of the village can treat him with justice and refute the false accusation.

But there is a statement that is being repeated in international circles and that states only half the truth and not all of it. It may be that a discussion of this statement will constitute a proper avenue that would help us find out the facts about who was behind this war; who has been benefiting from it; why did it not end quickly; and [give us answers to] other well-known questions.

This is the statement: "This war broke out with the encouragement of U.S. imperialism so that circumstances would be opportune for U.S. imperialism to regain its control over Iran and to extend its hegemony over the oil-rich Gulf area." This is a very fine statement, and it is very true. But those who are making that statement are not saying how and where this took place.

Those who made that statement are not flattering Iraq because there is some relationship between those who made the first accusation and those who made that statement. If those who made that statement--and they hold positions that are more responsible than those who made the first accusation--were, first, convinced and, second, capable of proving that it

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was U.S. imperialism that encouraged Iraq to launch this war, they would have made that statement without hesitation. But those who made that statement know the truth. They know that the United States and its plans are worlds apart from Iraq and its goals. Nevertheless, they say half the truth because they want to arouse the anger of the Iranians because they are entertaining certain designs in Iran and hurting Iraq in the process [of realizing those designs] is of no importance.

The story that U.S. imperialism encouraged the war between Iraq and Iran will certainly become evident. Did this encouragement take place in Baghdad, in Tehran or in both cities?

Let us discuss the possibility that it took place in Baghdad, as some circles would like to suggest directly or indirectly.

When a country like the United States succeeds in encouraging another country like Iraq to embark upon a dangerous operation such as war, it must rely on old and ancient ties as well as on objective rules that would enable it to make that possibility a reality. It is known that Iraq and the United States have not even had diplomatic relations for a long time. Relations between the two parties have been poor and tense during the past years. Even 5 years ago the United States was publicly encouraging internal rebellion against the regime in Iraq. Iraq was called in the U.S. press the leader of the rejection front, and it was accused of encouraging international terrorism. It was Iraq that initiated [the idea of] convening the Baghdad Summit, confronting the Camp David plan and isolating al-Sadat. The most unlikely occurrence in relations between Iraq and the United States is that Iraq, within the framework of its broad development plan, did not forbid American corporations from participating in some development projects. There are no U.S. weapons in Iraq, and Iraq has no deposits or property in the United States. Iraq does not have in the United States networks of relations with people or with economic, cultural or other institutions that would make it possible for the two countries to have an exchange about serious questions such as war.

The leadership in Iraq is not so stupid as to engage in a war with another state whose area and population are three times as large as its own, a state which is located on the borders of a major country such as the Soviet Union and which carries the banner of revolution it claims is Islamic simply because it allegedly had access to the reports of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency that made war with Iran appear in a favorable light; because one of the politicians or officers who oppose Khomeyni's regime offered erroneous information; or because a state in the area that is friendly to the United States offered Iraq such information. Such a possibility may be true if there were no state, no leader and no capable institutions in Iraq. But if all these are available and if this fact is known to those who are far and near, the simplest statement that can be made about such a possibility is that it is idiotic. Why should Iraq accept America's encouragement to engage in a war with Iran if Iraq is

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fighting [to regain] its occupied lands and Shatt al-'Arab? Iraq does not need "encouragement." This is a national objective that any national leadership must strive to achieve at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner. However, if this fight is for 'Arabistan, America's position on this matter is obvious, as we have already mentioned.

If we were to set aside the principles and the trends that are proclaimed in Iraq and if we were to consider only the objective facts in addition to a major fact about war, which is that most of the weapons in Iraq are Soviet weapons, would it then be possible for Iraq to accept U.S. encouragement to engage in a war it would fight with Soviet weapons against another country whose weapons were American?

The proponents of this mysterious "analysis" of the war were imagining that under the cover of dust clouds raised by the random accusations that were being made in the area, they could gain acceptance for such an interpretation without having anybody oppose it with logic and concrete evidence. But this was impossible! People cannot be fooled on major issues, for despite the fact that deception, forgery and falsehood are widespread throughout the area, there are those who can point out the facts and who can dot the i's and cross the t's. But what is the other half of the truth that the proponents of this "analysis" are hiding to flatter the Tehran regime in the hope that something may happen in Tehran?

The other half of the truth is the fact that this "encouragement" took place in Tehran and not in Baghdad. In Tehran there is more than one objective justification and more than one suitable condition for such an "encouragement" to take place; in Baghdad, however, there is not a single objective justification nor a single suitable condition.

How can that be?

The reality of conditions in Iran and the nature of the existing factions there explain how such an encouragement could have taken place.

It is known that there are three principal feuding factions in Iran's power structure, that relations between them are complex and that none of these factions, even up to the outbreak of war with Iraq, had been able to settle matters in its own favor.

The three principal factions are:

[1] The clergy and their followers.

[2] The civilian politicians who are influenced by western culture.

[3] The groups that have ties in one way or another with the United States; circles in the Iranian army are among them.

It is known that today there are no integrative institutions in Iran working within a central system that is capable of controlling information, factions and movements in all fields.

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It is in such a climate of fragmentation and internecine fighting that the best opportunities exist for direct or indirect intervention on the part of foreign powers, especially those that have deep roots in Iranian society.

It is true that the Shah is gone, that American advisers have gone with him and that the employees of the U.S. embassy are held as hostages, but the United States' presence in Iran is evident in every field: it is evident in the army, in the culture, in the economy, and it is evident in personal relations where there is a lengthy and a complex network of relations representing an objective fact that is the result of scores of years of strong close ties during the Shah's administration. Iran cannot get rid of this until long years of diligent effort have gone by under a stable, aware and competent leadership that would turn Iran seriously in that direction.

The clergy needed no encouragement to fight with Iraq. Since coming to power in Iran, they had defined their objective as striving to overthrow the regime in Iraq. They did not need encouragement after they came to power.

One may add that they were convinced that the practical capabilities for overthrowing the Iraqi regime were available to them. They became convinced of this through three channels:

The first channel was that of the opposition religious-political groups in Iraq, especially the al-Da'wah party, whose leaders moved to Iraq and Qom immediately after Iran's revolution. There, they stayed close to Iran's religious and political leaders, impressing upon them day and night that circumstances in Iraq had become "ripe" for overthrowing the regime. [They insisted] that the only thing Iran had to do was to help them with money, weapons and publicity. [Furthermore], Iran was not to come to an understanding with the existing regime [in Iraq]. The clergymen and some confused Iranian politicians were encouraged in their errors and erroneous calculations by some sabotage activities that had been planned by these religious groups and executed by Iranian agents; they imagined that what was said was the truth. The second channel was that of the U.S. media, the Zionist media and some of the western media that began to focus in a broad way on the alleged ideological contradictions in Iraq, describing the national regime there in a specific ideological manner. These media organizations also began to publicize and to focus on alleged news about the activities of the religious opposition, the activities of the rebellious Kurdish communities and even the activities of the communists. When clergymen in Iran read all this information with the deep hostility they harbor for Iraq--that, coupled with the inability in Iran to examine information carefully--their conviction was strengthened and their eagerness to strive to provoke the struggle with Iraq and even to launch a war against it [was fortified]. The third channel consisted of some Arab regimes and circles that took advantage of the hostility that Iran's leaders have for Iraq to incite the Iranians against the Iraqi regime and [to encourage the Iranians] to settle accounts with Iraq.

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On the other hand, western-educated politicians in Iran are of two kinds: one kind has no ties with the United States and the west. Those politicians are opportunists; they want to ride the wave and appease the clergy in order to obtain positions of power. Those people believe that harping on hostility towards Iraq was profitable in the new situation in Iran so they began to compete with each other in declaring their hostility towards Iraq, instigating such hostility and minimizing the import of Iraq without any regard for the consequences.

The other kind of western-educated politicians who are tied to the United States and to the west are the military who knew what they were doing.

All those in Iran who had ties with the United States knew that the struggle with Iraq would be a valuable opportunity for them. It would distract the new regime in Iran from the tasks of building the new society, and it would deplete [its resources]. Also, if this struggle were to develop into a war, the United States would be the number one issue in Tehran since the weapons in Iran are American, the combat ideology is American, the technical experience is American and everything in the war will be American. In addition, the Iraqis will use their Soviet weapons in their war against Iran, and there will [thus] be a vast opportunity to denounce the Soviet Union and its internationally famous weapons the Migs, the T-55's, the T-62's, the T-72's, the SAM'S the Kalashnikovs and other weapons, whereas words like the Phantoms, the F-14's, the Hawks and the TOWs will become very dear to the hearts of the Iranians who would be fighting in the name of the Islamic Revolution. This is what people of this kind have been striving for for many months. They used to insist strongly on heating up the struggle with Iraq and on scorning its military and political power.

In April 1980, President Bani Sadr said in a speech, "If the Iraqis pick a fight with us on our western borders, I will not be able to stop the Iranian army from advancing towards Baghdad." In the same speech Bani Sadr said that Iraq had tried mediation three times to solve its disputes with Iran and that he had rejected those mediations. Despite the background of hostility for the Iranian army that the Iranian masses have borne in their struggle against the former regime and its institutions, people who are in positions of leadership in the government and in the army began to sound warnings about the importance of rebuilding the army and providing its requirements. Haughty statements made by Iranian military leaders began to occupy a prominent place in the devices of the Iranian media.

Most of these statements were made in the context of comparing the power of the Iranian army in opposing the alleged danger that was coming from Iraq.

And thus it was that for many long months the three feuding parties in Tehran were fueling each other's hostilities against Iraq. The clergymen wanted to achieve their hopes of reaching the religious centers in Iraq;

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the opportunist politicians wanted to ride the wave; the U.S. agents considered the war with Iraq the best opportunity they had to restore the waters to their course; and the military men who had been oppressed by the clergymen and the revolutionary guard found in the war a valuable opportunity to fortify the positions they had lost in the tumult of the revolution.

You, gentlemen, who speak about the encouragement of U.S. imperialism, it is in this climate in Tehran that the "encouragement" took place; it did not take place in Baghdad, the stable, quiet city which has a patriotic cohesive leadership and agencies that are alert and highly capable of sorting through, calculating and analyzing [facts] and drawing conclusions from them.

But why is half the truth being told and why is the other half hidden?

Saying half the truth hurts Iraq. This does not matter because Iraq is asking for national independence. Last 8 February President Saddam Husayn called for the evacuation of all kinds of foreign bases and presence from the Arab homeland. He advocated that weapons not be used in Arab disputes, that is, he called for building an independent Arab family united in solidarity. Such statements would not please those who want to have a foothold in the Arab homeland even if that led to the presence of others. Dividing the influence and the shares would not hurt; it would rather help because getting a piece of a large pie, which is the Arab homeland, is better than getting nothing at all when [that pie] is the rightful property of the Arabs.

At the same time saying half the truth does not anger the Iranians. In Iran there is utter confusion, and those who are making such statements do not know in any specific way "where the U.S. devil hides." Is he hiding in the turbans of some clergymen, in the coats of some politicians who speak European languages or under the helmets of some military men? It is best at the present time not to anger anyone of these [groups] and to continue to watch and to observe to find out what is happening in this curious mixture of humanity. The labor pains may yield something.

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MAURITANIA

NATION'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROBLEMS NOTED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 9 Jan 81 p 78

[Text] By declaring three Libyan diplomats personae non gratae for "subversive activities" 15 days after the Libyan intervention in Chad and after the outbreak of disagreements among several Sahel countries and Tripoli, Mauritania is showing, AFP emphasizes, that it is aware of its "vulnerability."

This awareness of weakness by a vast country populated by only a million and a half inhabitants divided between Moors and black Africans, without large economic resources, has meant that Mauritania has never been able to be very long "the privileged ally" to anyone at all.

Claimed by Morocco at the moment of its independence; an ally of the French-speaking African countries of OCAM, then of Algeria, then of Morocco, Mauritania was bled white by 5 August 1978, the date of its agreement with the POLISARIO Front, ending the Western Sahara conflict, and it has tried since then, without accomplishing it yet, to maintain an equilibrium among different partners.

An example of this policy is compromised by the up-and-down relations between Nouakchott and Paris: after having signed its agreement with the POLISARIO Front, Mauritania had asked France to send 200 military technicians to Nouadhibou to help it to preserve its new "neutrality" in the Western Sahara affair.

Last June, to respond to a demand of the POLISARIO Front, Mauritania requested the rapid withdrawal of those technicians and of the French "tactical air force" from Nouakchott, which had served as a support for the Jaguar airplanes based at Dakar since the time when Mauritania was at war.

Since then relations between Nouakchott and Paris were only luke-warm and the principal ally of Mauritania was Iraq. Baghdad has granted it financial assistance on several occasions and Nouakchott supports Iraq in its conflict with Iran.

Besides, AFP recalls, there is a student strike in the Franco-Arab secondary shool, inspired according to the authorities by the pro-Libyans disputing the competency of Iraqi professors, which has been at the bottom of the present tension between Nouakchott and Tripoli.

Today, relations between Mauritania and France have become good again. Lt-Col Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, Chief of State, recently declared to the Nouakchott

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newspaper CHAAB: "The Mauritanian people have a great deal of consideration for France, which will remain a great friend to Mauritania, regardless of temporary situations."

The arrival in power on 15 December of a civil government charged with submitting to a referendum a constitution calling for multipartyism, has further accentuated this "opening" toward the Western countries. Besides, the American charge d'affaires in Nouakchott has declared to Prime Minister Sid'Ahmed Ould Bneijara that his country "supported the recent changes in Mauritania."

The most difficult equilibrium to maintain for Mauritania is one that concerns the countries implicated in the Saharan conflict. Morocco does not cease to accuse Mauritania of not being able to prevent the transit of the POLISARIO Front over the desert northern part of its territory.

The pro-POLISARIO elements in Mauritania, which have always existed, for their part reproach the government for not practicing a "positive neutrality." Relations with Algeria, broken during the war, have been normalized, but they have not again become the privileged relations of 1973.

Many Mauritanians privately confide that they fear an agreement between Algiers and Rabat which would anticipate, according to rumor, a fusion of the south of the Western Sahara and the north of Mauritania within a federated Mauritanian state. They also express the fear of seeing the POLISARIO Front, in case of a "cooling off" with Algeria, leaning on Libya.

All these fears have as a consequence the manner in which Mauritanian radio has commented on the recently proposed constitution while strongly insisting on the fact that it anticipates the defense of the "integrity of national territory."

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