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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

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Weekly Summary

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CONTENTS

October 8, 1976

The WEEKLY SUMMARY, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, the Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology.

25X1



1 Middle East		
Lebanon		
2 Africa		
Rhodesia		
3 Far East		
Thailand; <input type="text"/> China		25X1
4 Europe		
Italy; <input type="text"/>		25X6
Greece-Turkey; MBFR		
7 Western Hemisphere		
Canada; Cuba		
8 Thailand: <i>Shaky Political System</i>		
10 Nigeria: <i>Progress Toward Civilian Rule</i>		
12 Dispute Continuing over Western Sahara		
<input type="text"/>		25X1
17 South America: <i>Cooperation Among Military Regimes</i>		

Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcome. They may be directed to the editor of the Weekly Summary,

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Middle East

LEBANON 1-2

The Syrians called at least a temporary halt this week to their offensive in Lebanon's central mountains after pushing their Palestinian and leftist adversaries out of several key strongpoints by October 1. The pause—ordered ostensibly to permit further negotiations—seems designed to fix the blame primarily on Palestinian intransigence for the continuing political impasse.

At present, the Syrians appear bent more on sowing dissension among their opponents and eroding Yasir Arafat's leadership position within the Palestine Liberation Organization than on obtaining an acceptable political settlement. Damascus media have called increasingly for Arafat's removal as head of the PLO and Fatah and have implied that he has become the main obstacle in the way of a Syrian-Palestinian reconciliation. The Syrians reportedly demanded a change in the leadership of the Palestinian movement as a condition for a new cease-fire this week.

By presenting such an unpalatable condition, the Syrians appear to be deliberately courting Arafat's rejection; they are making it impossible for him to salvage any Palestinian independence in Lebanon and still reach an accommodation with Syria.

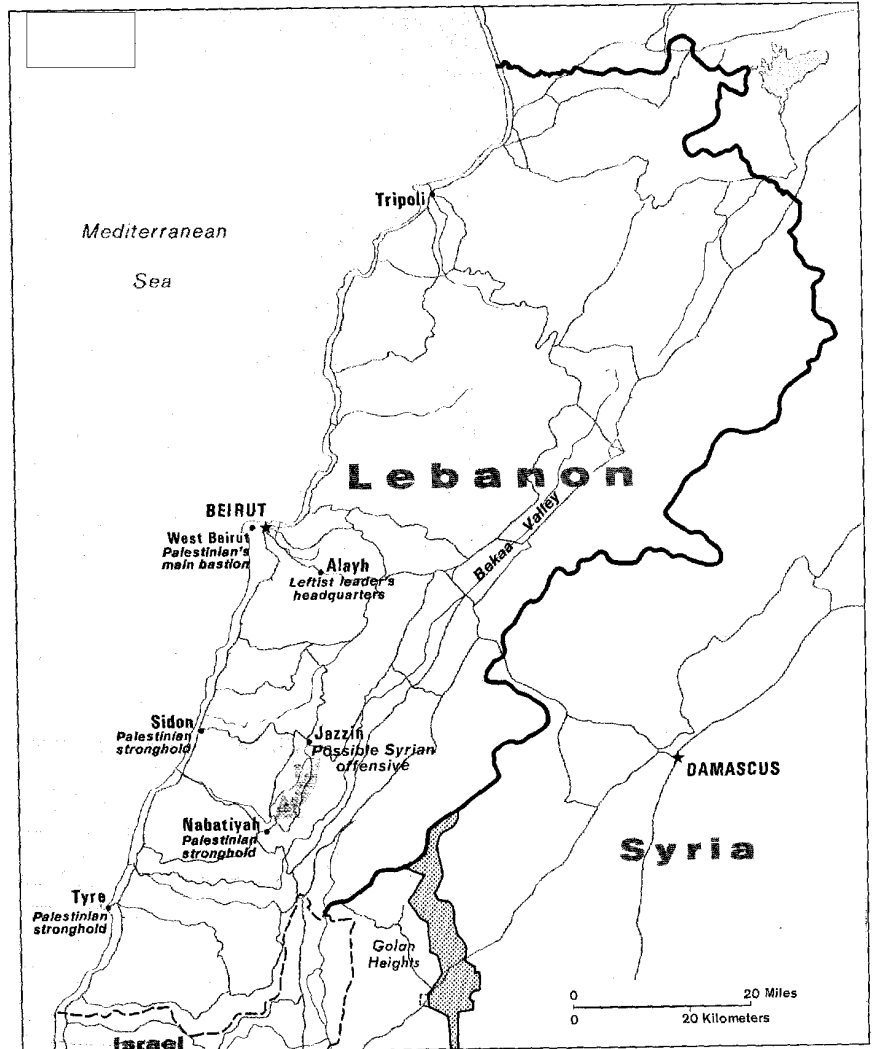
The Syrians may try to take Alayh, leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt's headquarters astride the major Beirut-Damascus road, where the Palestinians and their leftist allies are apparently well dug in. Or they may attempt to capture the northern port of Tripoli, where they and the Christians have recently reinforced their positions.

Because such assaults would result in heavy casualties, however, the Syrians apparently are leaning in favor of an offensive south and west from Jazzin, aimed presumably at isolating the Palestinian strongholds at Sidon, Tyre, and Nabatiyah and cutting them off from the Palestinians' main bastion in west Beirut.

According to press reports, Syrian Deputy Defense Minister Jamil met this week with several local Lebanese officials, political leaders and delegations from southern Lebanon; the Lebanese allegedly

requested the entry of Syrian troops and those of the Syrian-sponsored Lebanese "vanguard" army to restore security. The Syrians used such local appeals earlier this year to justify their occupation of the Bekaa Valley.

The Egyptians are still trying to keep themselves in the negotiating picture. Foreign Minister Fahmi paid a visit to Paris on short notice late last week, apparently to request France to send troops to Lebanon to buttress the Arab League security forces already there. France con-



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3-6

tinues to condition any French role on the agreement of all parties to the conflict.

The proposal, nevertheless, reportedly irritated the Saudis, who appear to hold President Sadat primarily responsible for the collapse of their efforts to convene a mini-summit on Lebanon. Sadat, still in a bitter anti-Syrian mood, has turned a deaf ear to Saudi complaints.

Soviet Initiatives

The Soviet proposal of October 1 for a resumption this month or next of the Geneva conference on the Middle East caps several weeks of Soviet diplomatic activity.

The call for a return to Geneva is similar to a Soviet proposal last April. At that time, Moscow was concerned that Egyptian abrogation of the Soviet-Egyptian friendship treaty—together with the visit of a US diplomatic mission to

Lebanon—had created the impression that the USSR was on the outside looking in.

The Soviets now propose:

- A conference in two stages, the first dealing with organizational and procedural problems and the second with substantive issues.

- Palestinian attendance "on an equal footing from the very outset"—phrasing which is far more supportive of the PLO's role than the Soviet proposal in April.

- An agenda that includes discussion of Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The Soviet statement makes a point of appealing to Israel by including agenda items that stress "appropriate international guarantees" for Israel's existence

and security as well as an end to the state of war between Arabs and Israelis. The Soviet proposal does not imply, as did the one last April, that a peace settlement would lead to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Soviets want to be part of any major negotiating activity in the Middle East. Their latest actions also suggest they believe the Lebanese situation is in a critical phase—especially after the Syrian offensive that began on September 28—and that it will further complicate Soviet relations with both Syrians and Palestinians.

Moscow's proposal follows a flurry of diplomatic activity that began three weeks ago:

- An authoritative article that appeared in *Pravda* on September 8 announced a more evenhanded policy toward Syrians and Palestinians.

- The Soviets consulted in mid-September with PLO leaders Arafat in Beirut and Qaddumi in Moscow.

- Geneva conference representative Vinogradov visited Syria two weeks ago to get Damascus' support for the Soviet initiative. The Soviets also made diplomatic contacts with other Arab states, including Egypt and Iraq.

The USSR's Geneva exercise has been a sterile one in the past, and Arab-Israeli reaction thus far indicates that the Soviets will be no more successful this time.

- A Soviet embassy official in Cairo remarked privately on October 4 that Egypt was "not particularly enthusiastic" about the Soviet proposal.

- Syrian President Asad, in an interview that appeared on the day of the Soviet proposal, was unusually critical of the USSR.

- Israeli officials have dismissed the Soviet initiative as "nothing new."

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Africa

RHODESIA 11-15; 17

Unity talks between two of the major Rhodesian nationalist factions apparently have made little progress so far. The talks between the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People's Union—the two groups that have guerrillas in the field—are now taking place in Maputo and are likely to shift to Dar es Salaam soon.

ZAPU, which has a stronger organizational structure inside Rhodesia than does ZANU, is said to be insisting that political unity must be achieved before military forces can be united. ZANU, which commands the loyalty of most of the guerrillas, refuses to enter into anything but a loose political alliance. ZANU leaders fear that political unity would only benefit ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, whom they have long distrusted.

ZANU representatives also met last week in Lusaka with representatives of

the faction led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa

Muzorewa had been left out of the original unity talks by the other factions and by the "front-line" African presidents. Muzorewa's welcome home last Sunday by a large and enthusiastic crowd, after over a year of self-imposed exile, suggests that he hopes to use his political following to win a key role in settlement talks.

The guerrilla leaders, as distinct from the nationalist politicians, continue to take a hard line in public on a settlement. At a press conference in Maputo last week, a guerrilla leader said that the fighting will continue until the Smith government is prepared to surrender unconditionally. Guerrilla activities in eastern Rhodesia have continued largely unabated in recent days.

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Far East

THAILAND

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It is not yet clear whether the Thai military's assumption of power on October 6 was an outright coup or a move invited by a frustrated and weary prime minister.

taking pains to convey the impression of an orderly change in government.

accommodation with Vietnam.

Both Sa-ngat and Kamon have been regarded as nonpolitical, highly professional military officers with high standards of personal honesty. Their reputations will lend credence to Sa-ngat's public statement that he and his colleagues do not aspire to hold power for an extended period. (An assessment of the fragile nature of parliamentary democracy in Thailand appears in the feature section of this publication.)

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The Administration Reform Party has dissolved parliament and banned political parties, but has pledged to respect the Thai people's "aspiration to preserve the democratic form of government."

In an address to the nation late on October 6, however, Admiral Sa-ngat, leader of the newly formed Administration Reform Party—controlled by the military

His explanation that the armed forces had felt it necessary to act to restore order and to eliminate alleged communists in the government suggests that the military might have taken the initiative and forced Seni's hand.

At the same time, military leaders are

One of the military administrators' first acts was to announce that all treaty commitments would be respected and good relations with all countries promoted. Both Sa-ngat and Kamon favor close Thai-US military relations and were troubled by the recent US withdrawals. It is possible that the military leaders will play down, if not reverse, the Seni government's emphasis on working out an



Admiral Sa-ngat



Air Chief Marshal Kamon

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CHINA

23-24

The Chinese marked National Day on October 1 with a facade of unity amid signs of continuing dissension within the leadership. The Peking-based members of the Politburo avoided festive activities but did appear at a meeting attended by 400

representatives of the "masses."

The leaders were listed in their normal protocol order, projecting an image of unity and continuity, and the meeting itself was billed as a symbol of unity between the leadership and the people. Politburo members from the provinces, who had apparently remained in Peking after Mao's funeral for a Politburo meeting, returned to their home bases for the holiday.

In a break with past practice, Peking's three major publications did not issue a joint editorial for National Day. Instead, *People's Daily* published an editorial of its own that called for studying Mao's works and made only passing reference to the campaign against Teng Hsiao-ping. That the other two major publications, which usually collaborate in joint editorials, did not lend their weight to this editorial could indicate some dissatisfaction with its content.

The editorial's treatment of Teng was

much milder than some recent articles that suggest the party's left wing is trying to breathe new life into the criticism campaign. There may also have been some disagreement over the editorial's characterization of Mao as pre-eminent among communist theoreticians. This was in contrast to a joint editorial by the three publications, issued on September 16, that named Mao as only one among several communist giants.

In another possible sign of conflict among the leadership, an article in the current issue of *Red Flag* resurrects a quotation from the disgraced former defense minister Lin Piao. This prominent use of a well-known Lin statement is the latest of several indications that Lin and the "coup" with which he was associated remain a contentious issue and that there is continued unhappiness over the army's loss of prestige since Lin's fall.

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Europe

ITALY

25-28

Prime Minister Andreotti began this week to seek parliamentary support for key portions of the economic stabilization program that his Christian Democratic minority government has been working on since August. The Communists, whose cooperation in Parliament is essential to Andreotti's survival, have so far shown a willingness to work with the Prime Minister. At the same time, they are clearly determined to shift economic and fiscal decision-making as much as possible to the legislature. Such a shift would enable the Communists to exert maximum influence on Andreotti's program.

Andreotti has asked Parliament to consider two proposals, which form the bare minimum for any effective stabilization

effort. To try to dampen inflationary pressures, he is requesting that automatic cost-of-living allowances be reduced for the upper 20 to 25 percent of wage earners, with a complete blockage of the allowances for the highest paid workers.

Andreotti also wants to increase prices for many public services and government-controlled commodities; some of the funds raised by hiking public service charges would be used to help finance a controversial industrial modernization and development program, the details of which Andreotti has not yet disclosed.

The Communists' inclination to cooperate with Andreotti is illustrated by the effort the Communist-dominated unions apparently made to encourage Italy's major labor federation to agree in principle this week to Andreotti's proposed limitation on cost-of-living increases. Ironically, the unions dominated by Andreotti's Christian Democrats were less receptive because of their larger proportion of highly paid workers.

The response of the Communists to Andreotti's proposed price increases, on the other hand, demonstrates that the party's price for continued cooperation is a larger role for Parliament in policy formation. Andreotti initially tried to raise certain prices by decree, as the government is legally empowered to do. The Communists, however, are holding Andreotti to an earlier pledge to consult Parliament, and the issue is being considered this week by two parliamentary committees, one of which has a Communist chairman.

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36-39

GREECE-TURKEY

The Greek and Turkish foreign ministers concluded their discussions in New York on October 1 by agreeing to a resumption of negotiations on the Aegean continental shelf and control of Aegean airspace. Representatives of the two governments will meet to consider both issues on November 2, probably in Switzerland.

Positive public comments by both sides suggest that the foreign ministers overcame some earlier obstacles. After the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Caglayangil expressed satisfaction that the Greeks no longer insist on discussing only the legal aspects of the dispute and are now willing to discuss other points such as the security requirements of the two countries.

In Athens, Greek officials said publicly that they were satisfied with the meeting, noting that the Turks had expressed understanding. This could mean that Caglayangil did not press Greece to

withdraw the case it submitted to the International Court of Justice. Caglayangil may also have again played down Greece's illegal militarization of its easternmost Aegean islands.

The apparent Greek decision to engage in more meaningful negotiations is partly a result of Turkish pressure in the form of the recent seismic exploration in contested Aegean waters. Athens has realized that its case does not have the full support of its allies and of the international community. This was evident in the UN Security Council's handling of the Greek appeal in August and in the subsequent rejection by the International Court of Justice of the Greek appeal for a temporary ban on Turkish exploration.

Despite the positive atmosphere of the New York meeting, the approaching Turkish election campaign and the Greek government's care not to alienate the Greek military by too conciliatory a policy appear to preclude any major breakthrough in the coming months.

[Redacted]

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Foreign Minister Caglayangil

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Force Reduction Talks Resume

The tenth round of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks opened last week in Vienna.

During the round last summer, the East finally provided data on its forces in Central Europe, thus opening the way for detailed discussions on force levels for the first time since the talks began in 1973.

The chances for progress during this round, which will conclude in December, depend on the allied ability to respond to the East's move by tabling updated figures on its own forces.

The principal stumbling block facing the Western allies is the French refusal to include data on French forces or to have them counted under the collective ceiling on ground troops the West wants established for both East and West. Although France does not participate in the Vienna negotiations and has disclaim-

ed any obligations under an eventual agreement, it had up until now allowed its forces to be included in the totals.

The allies are trying to arrange a compromise that would prevent France from publicly announcing its position. In general, they fear a French announcement would cause the Soviets to be reluctant to proceed with the negotiations. The West Germans also fear a French announcement would cause the East to stiffen its demand—which is directed at establishing limits on the size of the West German armed forces—for national rather than collective reduction commitments. West Germany also believes France's public defection from the allied position would undercut domestic support in West Germany for the talks.

On September 28, Chancellor Schmidt announced that, after the conclusion of a

SALT II agreement, he intends to approach Soviet leader Brezhnev and the newly elected American president in an attempt to breathe life into the negotiations.

The allies believe that a high-level approach to the French—most likely by the West Germans—is necessary also if a long-term solution is to be found.

In the interim, the allies may attempt to elicit further information on the "counting rules" the East used to arrive at force figures. These figures are lower than NATO estimates and challenge the Western assertion that there is a sizable disparity between Eastern and Western ground forces. The allies believe they can buttress their argument for asymmetrical reductions by establishing that the East's figures improperly exclude certain categories. [Redacted]

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54-56

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Canadian Parliament Opens with Liberal Party Popularity at New Low

Parliament reopens next week with public opinion polls showing that Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal Party has dropped to a new low in its popularity rating. The government's policy of bilingualism has provoked bitterness among both English- and French-speaking Canadians, and its wage-and-price controls are widely seen as major causes of continued high unemployment and a sluggish economy.

Trudeau is well aware of his problems. Last weekend, he bluntly told a provincial party gathering that the party is "out of touch" with the grass roots, disorganized, and ranks as a minor party west of Ontario. The Liberals have to be worried, he said, about their "future as a national party."



In the government's Speech from the Throne on Tuesday kicking off the new legislative year, Trudeau will undoubtedly call for a continued fight against inflation, but he might indicate some softening of the government's guidelines on wages and prices to placate both labor and business. There are indications that he will push for increased Canadian ownership in the transportation field and a streamlining of the cumbersome foreign investment review process.

Trudeau has already gotten off to a bad start this autumn. Federal-provincial

relations are strained, and labor has called for a nationwide work stoppage two days after Parliament convenes. The Prime Minister's critics say that his long-heralded cabinet shuffle last month removed men with the keenest political skills—those best suited to sell the government's programs, cool off frictions between English and French speakers, and strengthen the hands of the moderates.

They also charge that the shuffle has concentrated power largely in the hands of Trudeau cronies. This goes down poorly with a public that has become disenchanted as much with the quality of Trudeau's leadership as with the unpopular programs he pursues.



Western Hemisphere

CUBA 44-45

Prime Minister Fidel Castro acknowledged in a speech on September 28 that the Cuban economy is having serious problems because of the 60-percent drop in world sugar prices since last year.

Castro said Cuba has had to reduce hard-currency expenditures sharply and will have to cut imports if it is to meet the repayments schedule on its mounting debt with the West. Imports from the West, which totaled \$1.7 billion in 1975, were down an estimated 25 percent during January through May and may have to be reduced further this year.

Castro said imports from communist countries, which amounted to \$2.1 billion or 55 percent of total purchases last year, will be maintained.

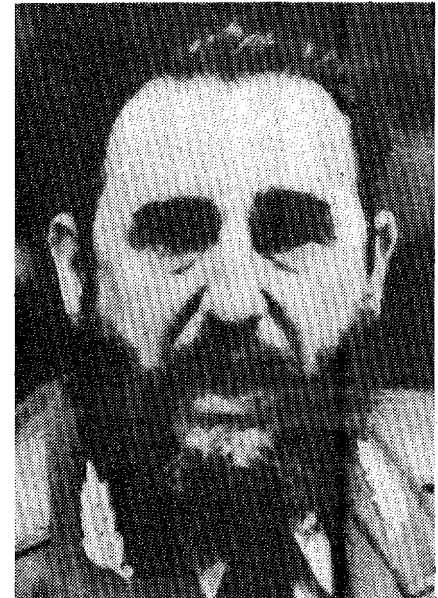
The Cuban leader announced a series of belt-tightening measures that will further restrict the already austere Cuban lifestyle. The coffee ration is to be cut—as

was the rice ration earlier in the year—because of drought and the need to conserve foreign exchange. Other consumer items, all or part of which must be imported from the West, will be limited and, in some cases, eliminated.

Castro reiterated that Cuba's basic development strategy will not change. Because of its comparative advantage in growing sugarcane, Cuba will not seek a radical diversification of agricultural production in an attempt to replace those products now being imported from the West. Sugar is still Cuba's most important export—accounting for 89 percent of total exports in 1975—and substantial expansion of nonsugar exports is several years away.

The reduction in imports from the West will lead to a cutback in production of manufactured goods—particularly consumer items—and force Cuba to revise downward its five-year plan that began this year. The cuts will complicate and delay achievement of the plan goals, which place considerable emphasis on Western capital equipment.

A large reduction in supplies of Western agricultural equipment, such as



Fidel Castro

sugar harvesters, would cause Cuba to fall short of its goal of producing 8 to 8.5-million tons of sugar by 1980, and will seriously inhibit expansion of other agricultural production.



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Thailand's experiment in democratic government was plagued from its beginning by problems that have deep cultural roots and are not easily changed.

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Thailand: Shaky Political System

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The return to martial law in Thailand—whether it proves to be temporary or drawn out—is yet another indication of basic weaknesses in the nation's three-year-old system of

parliamentary democracy. These weaknesses are reinforced by cultural patterns and are not susceptible to easy elimination. The instability and vacillation that have marked government performance can only reduce the already tenuous commitment to democratic rule in Thailand.

There have been three elected governments since the promulgation of the constitution in 1974. The first one lasted less than a month. Khukrit Pramot's administration lasted 11 months. His brother Seni's coalition ended a shaky five-month existence with his abrupt resignation on September 23. The coalition re-emerged two weeks later scarcely changed and with little prospect for improvement in its performance; it was hampered from the beginning by the maneuvering of rival coalition leaders and by the internal divisions in the Prime Minister's Democrat Party.

The multitude of parties competing for power—19 of the 41 that ran in the last election were represented in the parliament—so spread the vote as to make coalition government unavoidable. Yet the coalitions did not represent common political purposes so much as associations of convenience among party leaders who saw cabinet membership as the best way to protect and advance their personal interests.

With coalitions divided by conflicting personal ambitions and interests, the development of coherent government policies has been virtually impossible until

a near-crisis compelled some temporary consensus.

Political parties—now suspended at least temporarily—are basically alien to the Thai culture. Only the Democrat Party has a semblance of permanence (it has existed since 1946). Other parties have made fleeting appearances, usually created for the parliamentary contests that briefly interrupted military rule. The civilian elite tended to shy away from the risks and futility of party politics, preferring the real power and influence of the bureaucracy.

The Democrat Party comes closest to being a political party in the Western sense. It draws support largely from the Bangkok area, but is developing strength in other parts of the country, particularly in the south, and is more of a national party than any other. Once regarded as the best organized and least corrupt of the Thai parties, it has become deeply divided along regional and generational lines, divisions that clearly weakened the position of former prime minister Seni and dissipated the strength that should have accrued from the party's large plurality in the just-dissolved Assembly.

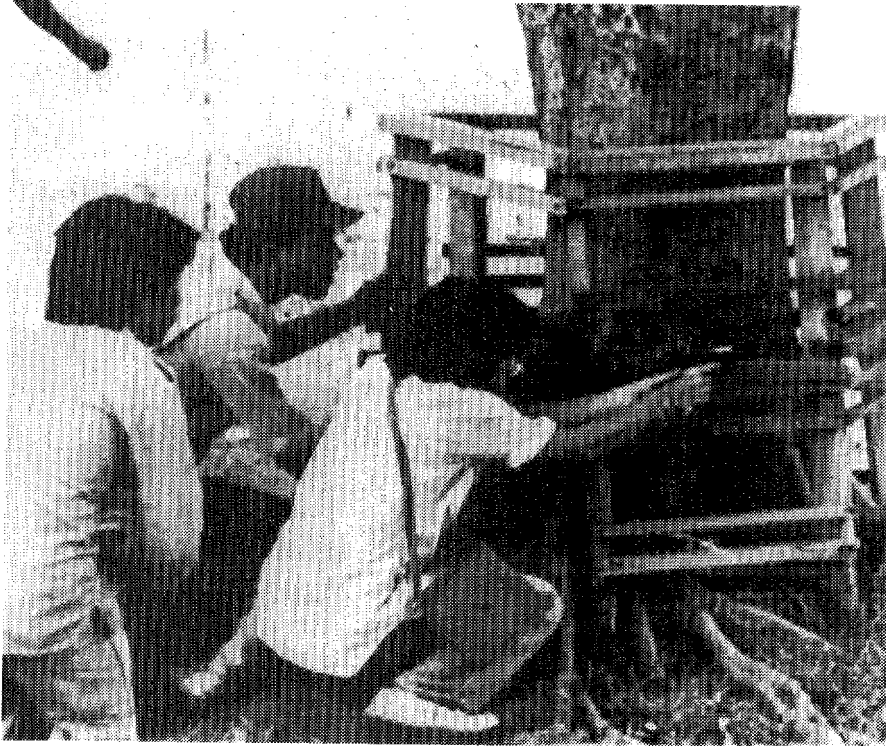
The Thai Nation Party, the second largest, is more typical of Thai political bodies; it is a coalition of conservative businessmen, many of them retired military officers, and civilian bureaucrats held together by a web of personal and business relations. The party is descended from a powerful military clique of the 1950s that was ousted from power by



Seni Pramot

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Left-wing students at Thammasat University open fire during demonstration

Field Marshal Sarit in 1957. The overthrow of Sarit's heirs, Thanom and Praphat, gave the old clique new life.

Political Cliques

Most of the political parties are composites of such cliques, or, in the case of many of the small ones, temporary vehicles to further one person's ambition. The Thai clique system is a reflection of the patron-client phenomenon that pervades Thai society—a natural falling into place of a superior-inferior relationship with attendant obligations on each side.

Such a system can be a source of social and political stability, as in Japan. In Thailand, however, patron-client relations are transitory—clients are constantly reassessing the advantages of existing arrangements and seeking more beneficial patrons. In the parliamentary context, parties were unstable, continually shifting in relative strength as individual members offered their allegiance to the highest bidder.

The 1974 constitution corrected some

of the more glaring deficiencies that contributed to the failure of earlier experiments in representative government.

Members of the legislature could no longer change parties without losing their seats, a provision that contributed to some stability in the most recent Assembly. The legislators, however, could and did sell their votes. In general, the Assembly behaved more responsibly and cautiously under the 1974 constitution. It did not, for example, throw down the gauntlet to the military at budget time, a tactic that helped to bring down the parliament in 1971.

Protest and Polarization

Fractious and vacillating government clearly endangered the long-range prospects for democracy in Thailand. The Thai are a conservative people, comfortable with forms of paternalistic authoritarianism and uncertain that free-wheeling Western democracy is really compatible with their society and their needs.

The growth of protest politics and its attendant violence contributed to public skepticism and reduced the tolerance level of right-wing civilian and military groups. In the past few years, students, workers, and farmers, traditionally passive elements of society, were increasingly drawn into active politics—but their impact was sporadic.

The protest movements tended to be divided into competing cliques that expended much of their energies in internecine feuding. They were, however, capable of coalescing temporarily around a dramatic issue and placing considerable pressure on the government for relatively short periods.

The students remain the cutting edge of protest politics. They have lost much of the glamor they once enjoyed for their role in bringing down the military regime in 1973. Since then, the more visible activists have grown increasingly leftist and now form the core of a nascent radical movement.

The radicalism of a few student leaders and the public's impatience with their activities encouraged repressive measures by right-wing forces. Groups such as the NAWAPHON (New Strength Group) and the Red Gaur, little more than bands of armed thugs, were used successfully to intimidate the students and other radical activists. The extremism of both rightists and leftists has contributed to a growing polarization in Thai politics, which has been reflected in the increasing violence of recent months.

This growing tendency to violence may abate somewhat under martial law at least initially, since leftist activists are likely to go into hiding to avoid arrest—and worse—at the hands of the military.

The King

The King has little formal political authority, but he commands considerable moral influence and has been an important stabilizing factor. His intervention in 1973—when he gave protection to student leaders and helped persuade Thanom and Praphat to leave the country—and the moral support he gave the new political

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structure had a critical impact on political developments. In moving on October 6 to take charge, the military was doubtless convinced that the King supported the declaration of martial law.

The King has been clearly disturbed by the sense of instability that has permeated civilian politics since 1973. He was appalled by the growing left-wing movement and fearful that coalition governments beset by infighting could not cope with the country's problems.

The special relationship he has carefully cultivated with the student community has probably been seriously damaged by his disenchantment with the student activists. He was outraged at reports alleging that the student demonstrators hung the crown prince in effigy on October 6, and his alienation from the students will not only reduce the King's ability to act as a calming influence but also encourage excessive reactions by the right.

The Army

The key factor in Thailand's political future is, as always, the army. With strong leadership, the army could be the

most disciplined and effective political force in the country—ready to be used as a voting bloc to influence a parliamentary election or as the muscle for a coup.

The First Division of the First Army—the Bangkok garrison—is the traditional coup force, and the political proclivities of the First Army commander are of utmost importance to the government. The minister of defense holds another crucial post; he can place his allies in key military assignments when the annual retirements and rotations take place. The supreme military commander, as head of all the armed forces, is also in an influential position, as indicated by his selection on October 6 to run the new interim military council.

Until called upon to take over in the wake of the new student violence this week, most senior army officers seemed disinclined to think in terms of a return to military rule. There was growing dissatisfaction within the military with the government's weak and ineffectual performance, but most of the senior officers apparently felt that the army should not

be directly responsible for the collapse of Thailand's fragile democracy.

Their basic interests were not seriously threatened by the conservative civilians in power, and the military's links to the political parties enabled them to manipulate the political system. The outbreak of serious violence together with Seni's manifestly weak leadership, however, set the stage for the declaration of martial law.

Disunity and Indecision

Thailand's parliamentary government has always been sustained more by negative factors than by positive ones. The parliamentary government's underpinnings have been weak, and the commitment to its conceptual foundation fragile. The majority of the Thai people had become increasingly disenchanted with the weak performance of their government under former prime ministers Seni and Khukrit, and, while not pleased at the prospect, are probably resigned to living for a period under the martial law regime established on October 6.

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The military regime is committed to a complex plan for reorganizing government at all levels and returning control to civilians by 1979.

57-61

Nigeria: Progress Toward Civilian Rule

Head of state General Obasanjo renewed last week the commitment made a year ago by his predecessor, General Mohammed, to hand over the reins to civilians in 1979. In an address on October 1, marking the 16th anniversary of Nigerian independence, Obasanjo emphasized the progress the military regime has made during the past year toward returning the country to civilian rule.

Obasanjo was making his first national day appearance as Nigeria's leader. He moved into the top spot last February when Mohammed, who came to power after the ouster of General Gowon in July 1975, was killed in an abortive power grab by disgruntled military officers.

As a southerner and the first Yoruba to be head of state, Obasanjo was initially uncomfortable in the leadership role because he thought he might not be accep-

table to Mohammed's fellow Muslim northerners. He now appears to be warming to his job, but he remains highly sensitive to the northerners' feelings. He made a point, in his speech, of paying effusive homage to Mohammed.

In fact, the northerners, who agreed to Obasanjo's succession for the sake of national unity, appear to have lost little or no influence. Their chief representative on the ruling Supreme Military Council,

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GAMMA

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Shehu Yar Adua, is the regime's second ranking member—if not its strongman.

Program for Civilian Rule

In his speech, Obasanjo reported "significant advances" in the five-stage program for returning the country to civilian rule that General Mohammed outlined last year.

One first-stage goal was reached early this year when the military government decreed the creation of seven additional states and declared closed the long-standing statehood controversy. The decision satisfied at least some of the minorities in the original 12 states that had long pressed for their own states in order to have more voice in national affairs.

Obasanjo announced that a draft constitution—another first-stage goal—would be made public this week for a year of public discussion. The draft, the work of a 49-member citizens' committee, was completed last month ahead of schedule.

The draft calls for an elected president and vice president, a bicameral federal legislature, elected governors for the 19 states, civilian control of the armed forces, and national political parties. A national constituent assembly is to be convened in October 1977 to adopt the constitution.

An ambitious plan for reorganizing the country's local government structure by October 1978—another goal set by Mohammed—has also been launched. The government characterizes the plan as the "cornerstone" of its civilian rule program.

Existing local government bodies are to be dissolved and new local councils chosen in nonpartisan elections in some states late this year. Caretaker councils are being formed to serve until the elected councils take office in January.

Obasanjo announced the appointment of an election commission to begin initial preparations for state and federal elections, probably in 1979. The commission will organize and oversee the elections, register voters and political parties, and delimit constituencies as prescribed by the

constitution.

According to the timetable announced by Mohammed last year, all these steps are to be completed in time for the military to return to the barracks on October 1, 1979.

Hurdles Ahead

The regime has pushed its program for return to civilian rule aggressively, but the steps ahead contain numerous pitfalls. For example, reorganizing local government without provoking a serious backlash from traditional local leaders, especially in the north, will be tricky.

The powerful Muslim emirs and other traditional rulers have long opposed the introduction of elective government in their areas. They withheld public support of the plan until the regime modified its reforms to allow for many "local peculiarities," specifying that emirs may be nonpartisan presidents of local councils and may continue to "aid" in tax collection. Many traditionalists also object to the regime's proposal that women be allowed to vote.

The campaigning for the local elections could easily rekindle old ethnic and regional animosities that have beset Nigerian politics in the past. Political parties remain banned for the coming local elections, but ambitious politicians will feel compelled to start building a following. If the local politicking begins to reopen old political wounds, the regime may decide to stretch out its timetable.

Before the local councils take office, an old controversy over the population census may crop up again. The boundaries of each local unit and funds provided to it apparently will be determined by the figures in the 1963 census. These are disputed by rival ethnic groups.

Among Nigerians there is still widespread skepticism that the present or any successor military regime will actually give up power voluntarily. Some high-ranking officers are widely believed to be amassing personal fortunes, and some observers suspect they will find excuses not to follow through on their program—especially if it runs into problems.



General Obasanjo

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There is no end in sight to the dispute over Western Sahara, but none of those involved—Morocco and Mauritania on one side and Algeria on the other—now seems anxious to push for a showdown.

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Dispute Continuing Over Western Sahara

Seven months after Spain turned over administrative control of Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania on the basis of an agreement reached in Madrid in November 1975, the legal status of the former Spanish territory is still being actively contested by Algeria. The prospects for a negotiated settlement seem remote, and neither King Hassan nor President Boumediene shows any disposition to compromise.

Throughout the past summer, the

quarrel between Morocco and Mauritania on one side and Algeria on the other has been played out in international forums while guerrillas of the Algerian-backed Polisario Front, who are seeking the territory's independence, have continued their steady harassment of Moroccan and Mauritanian forces.

The pattern of diplomatic wrangling and sustained guerrilla warfare is likely to continue for some time. Neither side now seems to want a direct military showdown, and Algeria is capable of support-

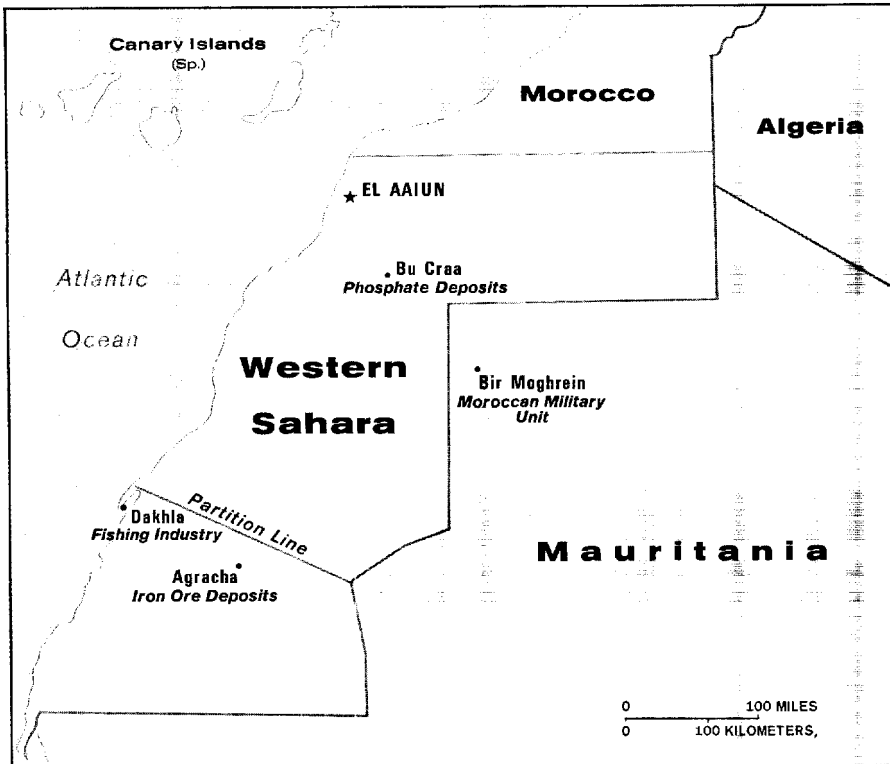
ing the insurgency indefinitely. The danger is that Morocco may eventually become so frustrated with a guerrilla war of attrition, which King Hassan has repeatedly warned he will not tolerate, that it will resort to direct retaliation against Algeria.

Territory Partitioned

Moroccan and Mauritanian forces occupied Western Sahara soon after the November agreement, and the two countries formally partitioned it last April. Morocco acquired the northern two thirds, including the rich phosphate reserves at Bu Craa, and Mauritania gained control of the lucrative marine resources at Dakhla and the unexploited iron ore at Agracha. Each country proclaimed the extension of its sovereignty over its portion of the territory.

Algeria, for its part, has been following a two-track policy attempting both to secure international censure of Morocco and Mauritania and to develop the Polisario Front into a credible military and political force. So far, the Algerians have had little success lining up diplomatic support for their position or for the Polisario "state"—Saharan Democratic Arab Republic—created under their auspices last February. Only Algeria, eight other African states, and North Korea have recognized the Front's government-in-exile.

In political forums, Algeria argues that the partition arrangement is illegal and continues to demand a referendum on self-determination under UN auspices. The Algerians cite a number of resolutions adopted by previous UN General Assemblies that call for such a



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procedure, including one passed last December.

Morocco and Mauritania point to another UN resolution, also adopted by the General Assembly last December, that in effect recognized the Madrid accord. They insist that the resolution's requirement for consultations with the territory's inhabitants was fulfilled last February when the Saharan assembly—a consultative body originally created by Spain but subservient to Rabat at the time—endorsed the turnover agreement. The UN, however, has not accepted the Moroccan-Mauritanian position because there was no UN role as called for in both resolutions.

In late June, a meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of African Unity, after a stormy debate, passed an Algerian-favored resolution reaffirming the Western Saharan people's right to self-determination and defeated a Moroccan-Mauritanian motion to censure



King Hassan

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Algerian aggression. The Moroccans walked out of the session and threatened to withdraw permanently from the OAU.

Algiers' victory proved to be short-lived. The followup OAU summit meeting in early July shelved the pro-Algerian resolution and passed a face-saving compromise—a proposal for a special summit on Western Sahara. There is little enthusiasm among OAU members for such a meeting, and it may never take place. Thus far, no member has formally requested that a summit on Western Sahara be convened.

Morocco views the Western Sahara issue as a bilateral dispute with Algeria and wants to limit further deliberations to reducing tensions in the region. Morocco prefers that any discussion of the problem be confined to the Arab League, where Morocco has considerable support, rather than the OAU.

The Moroccans, nonetheless, successfully exploited the OAU proposal to blunt Algerian efforts to secure backing at the nonaligned summit in Sri Lanka in August. The nonaligned heads of state merely took note of the OAU proposal in their political declaration, expressing hope for a peaceful solution.

At the UN

Algeria almost certainly will seek a full-scale debate on the Western Sahara issue at the current General Assembly session, but the Algerians' poor showing at the nonaligned conference suggests they may be unable to win support for another resolution.

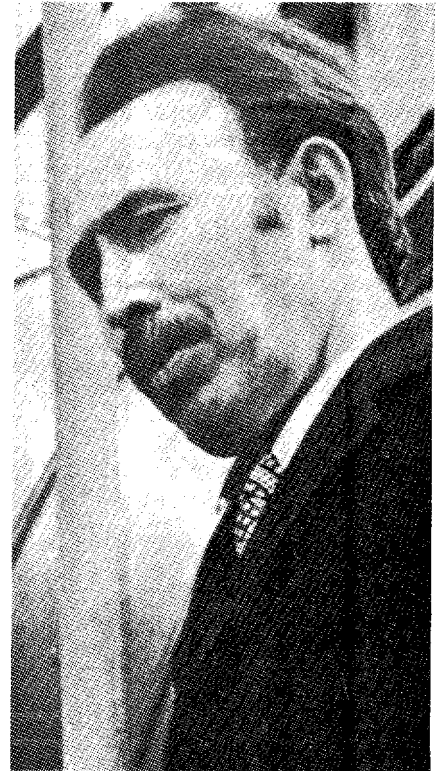
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Morocco's fallback position probably will be to argue that the dispute should be left for deliberation in regional bodies.

With the UN in mind, Morocco and Mauritania have begun a propaganda campaign calling for the return of Saharan refugees in Algeria. Morocco is asserting that only a few refugees in Algeria are from Western Sahara and that these "Moroccan citizens" are being held against their will by Algerian

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President Boumediene

authorities.

Morocco and Mauritania are sensitive about the refugee issue because it undermines their argument that the Western Saharans have been consulted. They have pushed their case against Algeria with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the hope that Algeria will be unable to exploit this issue when the Commission meets in committee early next month.

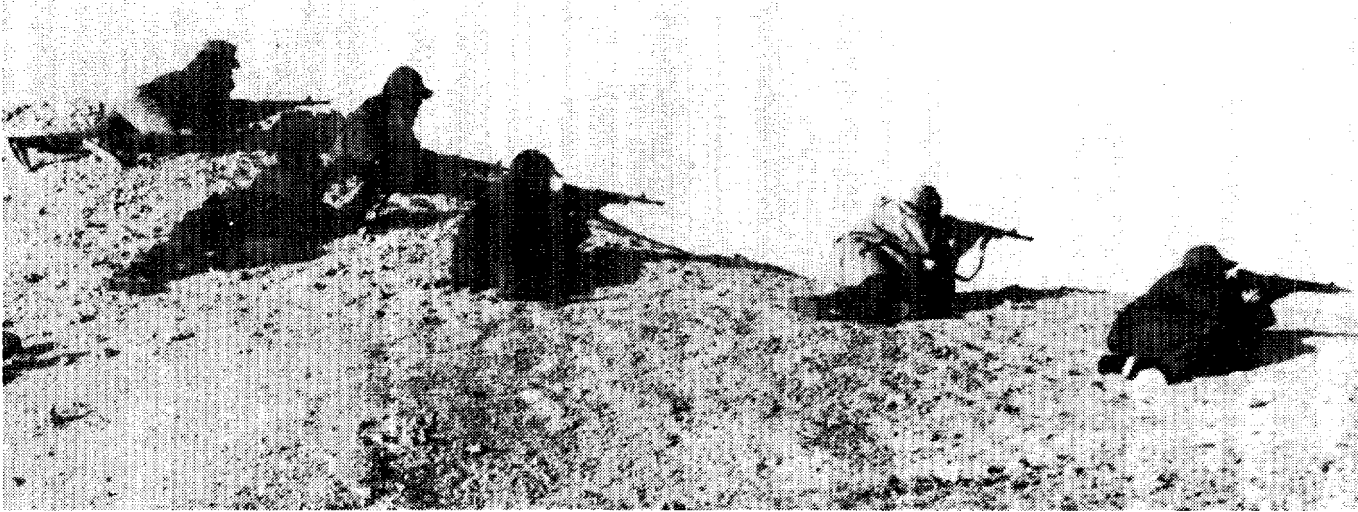
In the Territory

Morocco and Mauritania are firmly established in the principal towns of Western Sahara, but they have not been able to eliminate Polisario guerrilla infiltration and harassment in outlying areas. At least 2,000 to 3,000 guerrillas continue to carry out sabotage and hit-and-run attacks in southern Morocco and Mauritania, as well as in Western Sahara.

In early June, the Front launched a surprise attack against the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott. The guerrillas in-

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Mauritanian army troops on patrol

flicted little damage and suffered heavy casualties, but the raid underscored Mauritania's vulnerability as the weakest party to the dispute.

Since the attack on Nouakchott, military cooperation between Morocco and Mauritania has increased. A special radio link between the two countries' senior military commanders is being set up, and a small Moroccan military liaison group reportedly has been sent to Nouakchott.

The continuing guerrilla harassment is affecting the morale of both civilians and Moroccan military personnel in Western Sahara.

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To counter the Polisario, Morocco has so far relied on extensive sweep and clear operations. These have proved largely ineffective because of the inability of Moroccan forces to respond quickly to the scattered attacks mounted by small and mobile guerrilla units.

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We believe King Hassan, for the present, will keep any operations by army commandos inside Western Sahara. He may later be tempted, however, to use Moroccan irregulars in cross-border operations to seek out Polisario guerrillas inside Algeria.

Algeria, given its own support for the Polisario, might go no further than responding in kind to irregular guerrilla operations. If Moroccan regular army units become involved, however, the situation could quickly deteriorate into wider hostilities.

Prospects

Algeria does not seem to want a direct military confrontation with Morocco, but it almost certainly will continue to support Polisario guerrilla warfare in Western Sahara. The Algerians believe time works in favor of liberation movements and hope the Moroccans become bogged down fighting a long and costly insurgency.

Domestic political and economic considerations argue against Boumediene's initiating hostilities with Morocco. He probably will be preoccupied for several

months organizing the constitutional referendum and national election he has promised in order to give his regime a stamp of legitimacy. Economic development, Algeria's number-one priority, already suffers from a shortage of financing; Boumediene is not likely to divert additional resources to support a cause that does not appear to be making much headway.

Morocco, for now at least, is unlikely to escalate its dispute with Algeria. To do so would undermine the initiatives it is planning at the UN and the diplomatic support it has carefully cultivated among other Arab and African states. The recent routine rotation of fresh, and probably inexperienced, Moroccan troops into Western Sahara suggests the Moroccan government is continuing the level of its military effort there.

The prospects for a negotiated settlement seem remote. In any eventual political deal, Algeria would have to settle for limited consultations with the Western Saharan people that did not alter Moroccan and Mauritanian control. Morocco, in turn, would have to accept at least a token exercise of self-determination in the territory and possibly a special administration that provided a facade of local self-government.

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The military-controlled governments in southern South America all feel threatened by domestic terrorism and share a sense of isolation from the rest of the world. They are cooperating in an increasing variety of bilateral and multilateral programs.

South America: Cooperation Among Military Regimes

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Circumstance and mutual interest are drawing leaders of the southern cone countries—Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay—into closer political and economic cooperation. The army-controlled governments of these countries share a ubiquitous fear of communist subversion, a growing feeling of isolation from the rest of the world, and a concern that they are being abandoned by the US.

Brazil and Bolivia are beginning to participate in the relationship but have reservations for one reason or another. A close-knit alliance of these countries could have important implications for the US.

The southern cone regimes purport to be “democratic,” but are clearly authoritarian. The men in power do not get their support from political groups, but from the military.

Most of the military leaders are convinced they can exert a modernizing influence on government through increased efficiency and rationality. Most believe

they are better qualified to govern than civilian politicians.

The views of these military leaders seem to be coalescing into a still-unformulated philosophy of military administration in which an abhorrence of disorder, distrust of the old politics, and dedication to social and economic progress are the driving forces.

Fear of Subversion

The military leaders believe the primary national concern should be security. The principal enemies are leftist terrorism and international communism. Preserving the nation, in their view, must take precedence over personal well-being and individual freedom.

The preoccupation with security may seem excessive, but for the countries that have participated in a struggle against terrorists, the fight is real. It is true, for instance, that political violence in Argentina took more lives last year than the total killed in Northern Ireland during the past five years. All of the southern cone countries, to one extent or another, feel

threatened by terrorist violence.

Isolation

Most of the countries suffer from a poor image in the world press and in international forums. The military governments are variously described as “totalitarian” and “fascist.” One Brazilian government official lamented to US embassy officers that the Israelis are praised for staging a raid into Africa against terrorists, but similar counterterrorist activities in Brazil are called excessive and cruel in the world press.

Leaders in the southern cone also believe that investigations by unofficial and official bodies such as Amnesty International and the UN Commission on Human Rights are overzealous and misguided. The leaders think they should have the right to eliminate terrorists without foreign interference.

Chilean leaders in particular are weary of “international interference,” and profess to see the recent murder in Washington of former ambassador

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Letelier as part of a plot to discredit the nation. All of these countries believe they are the victims of an international campaign led by the communists.

Close Cooperation

The original impetus for cooperation among the southern cone countries probably came from Chile. Following the coup in 1973, the Chilean regime was anxious to acquire friends and military equipment for protection against a perceived threat from Peru.

The Chileans first approached Brazil and came away with the belief that Brazil at least would lend a hand indirectly if Chile were invaded. Chile then approached Bolivia and proposed a renewal of discussions on an outlet to the sea. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were re-established in February 1975.

The military coup in Argentina last March brought Buenos Aires into step with its neighbors. The Argentines increasingly began talking of "new realities" in hemisphere affairs and cooperation among all of the southern cone countries including Brazil.

After a period of concentration on the internal security situation and the economy, the Argentine government finally felt secure enough early last summer to implement some new foreign policy initiatives. In June, the Foreign Ministry sent carefully selected ambassadors to Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Paraguay. High Argentine officials also began visiting around the continent to discuss topics of mutual interest.



Current Status of Cooperation

Diplomatic activity in the southern cone has continued. Argentina and Brazil reportedly have had discussions on creating a "South Atlantic Treaty Organization." This naval alliance is envisaged as a defense of the South Atlantic against the Soviet-Cuban presence in southern Africa. The Brazilians, so far, have dismissed talk of an alliance as nonsense, but rumors persist.

Argentina and Paraguay agreed this month to increase trade by eliminating customs barriers. They also said they would stimulate complementary joint industrial projects. Argentine President Videla met with Uruguayan President Mendez and agreed to increase cooperation between the two governments. Videla is scheduled to visit Chile and Bolivia at the end of this month.

Chilean diplomacy continues to be directed against Peru, but improved relations between the two countries have diminished the urgency of the Chilean effort. Chile is continuing to talk with Bolivia about an outlet to the sea. Chilean willingness to discuss the problem and Peruvian intransigence have improved relations between Chile and Bolivia.

Chile is working to increase trade relations with Paraguay and Uruguay. It is already involved in a "joint integration commission" with Argentina and also hopes to increase trade with that country.

Chile has concluded that the Andean Pact^{25X1} restricts development and that there is a better market for Chilean products in the southern cone.

Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay also have been discussing trade and cooperation. Brazil and Paraguay already are involved in the construction of the Itaipu hydroelectric project on the Parana River. Paraguay and Uruguay have just launched a joint commission; its first task is to eliminate customs restrictions between the two countries.

Many intangibles will affect the extent of southern cone cooperation. There are many reasons why these countries would be drawn together in some sort of an alliance, but there are also old antagonisms.

The great imponderable is Brazil—the only country in the area with true global aspirations. Until now, Brazil has been lukewarm toward an extensive alliance with neighboring countries. Whether or not Brazil can be enticed into joining the group may be one key factor in the extent and direction of southern cone cooperation. A lasting improvement in relations between Argentina and Brazil would be a difficult achievement under any conditions, but the leaders of both nations may now be prepared to try to accomplish just that.

Continued perception of mutual interest among all of these countries is the most important element in the future of their relationship. A prolongation of terrorist activities in the southern cone will drive these countries into further cooperation.

Continued US criticism for human rights violations will heighten the sense of abandonment already prevailing in the area and intensify the feeling of isolation and frustration. This could foster closer cooperation and increasing protests against US interference in internal affairs.

Chilean and Uruguayan leaders have already suggested publicly that their continued swallowing of criticism from the^{25X1} US on human rights issues is not worth the limited assistance they now get from Washington.

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