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26 February 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
(FOUO 3/79)



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EGYPT

HAYKAL COMMENTS ON U.S., USSR MIDDLE EAST POLICIES

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English No 54, Feb 79 page number not given LD

[Interview with Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal by roving correspondent Fulvio Grimaldi on a "recent" visit to London]

[Text] Grimaldi: How do you evaluate present Soviet policies toward the Middle East, in the light of Camp David, the Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations and the Baghdad Summit?

Haysal: It is a wait-and-see position. The Soviets have been through several shocks in the Middle East. Most of the arms they ever gave to the region went to Egypt and Syria between November 1972 and June 1973. Then came the October War, and Soviet spirits were very high. The biggest shock was experienced after the war, when they were expelled from Egypt and Kissinger managed to seriously impair their options by the situation he brought about in the area.

Since 1975 the Soviets have been re-evaluating their ideas on the Middle East. But these new developments, which are part of a huge American offensive, came too early. They weren't ready yet, engaged as they were with most of their energies in the east, where they face China, and in Europe. And they were still licking their wounds after the failure of what had been their own offensive in the Middle East, previous to the abrogation of the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty in 1975.

Their reactions are therefore limited, for the time being, to exploiting the opportunities being offered. They have reconciled themselves to a tactical defeat and are waiting for upcoming chances. I believe that the general situation is bound to offer them these changes. When, I don't know.

Question: But are you really convinced that the West is on the offensive and is successful in its offensive?

Answer: In 1955 the West was mostly concerned with the northern part of the region and it established a series of alliances to stabilise that part:

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NATO, SEATO and the abortive Baghdad Pact. They appeared to succeed, as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan seemed pretty stable. But they didn't succeed in drawing Iraq into the system and they needed Iraq for strategic depth. The degree to which things can go wrong in such operations is shown by the fact that now the whole northern area is collapsing. There is serious trouble in Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, and Afghanistan has been lost.

You can see that the Americans are making incredible mistakes, and they keep making them now by pushing things as they are doing, particularly by concentrating all their efforts on peace between Egypt and Israel alone. The north is in disarray already and this strategy is now going to destabilise the southern part as well.

Question: In that case one would imagine that the opportunities for a global Soviet strategy are ripe. Or are they perhaps not too unhappy with Camp David?

Answer: I don't think they are at all happy with Camp David. But their subdued reaction to the agreements and even to the subsequent Baghdad Summit of the countries opposed to Sadat's policy doesn't constitute a strategy. It rather shows a lack of strategy. The USSR realises that the situation is still extremely fluid; things are happening all the time, and it wants to keep its options open for a while. It is not as yet ready to move full blast in one specific direction; it hasn't worked it out yet. So the Soviets limit themselves to watching the developing situation closely, and until the situation becomes clearer they isn't much they can do without risking mistakes. However, I don't think they will have to wait much longer.

This of course doesn't mean that they don't have a general strategic concept. The strategic concept is there and won't change. What they are hesitating about is putting all the necessary power behind this concept and gathering the readiness to get out and implement its next parts. But, make no mistake, this hesitation doesn't mean that the Middle East isn't important to them. Whenever I had meetings and discussions with Soviet authorities at the highest level I felt clearly how important it was to them. The people in the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party dealing with the Middle East have always been, and are, one of the most powerful pressure groups in the establishment.

Question: Do you therefore feel that the Soviet Union has learned its lesson from its Egyptian experience?

Answer: In the course of the years the Soviets have made enormous investments in the Middle East, in political, economic, ideological, military and other terms. Gradually they have developed a set of rules which has changed with the times and has certainly adapted itself to the new circumstances in the light of the experiences made.

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However, differences over dealing with the area exist within the leadership, mainly between those that tend to opt for a more adventurous, dynamic policy--and these are the generals and admirals obviously--and those who favour a more cautious and rational approach. Nobody, among all these people, however, questions the general strategy that acknowledges the absolute need to be there. The arguments are mainly about timing.

Question: How do the Soviet Union and the United States development aid policies for Egypt compare?

Answer: From the point of view of cash, the United States and the West generally may be more useful. But for development, the USSR contribution is by far better. The U.S. for instance, would have never helped us to build the Aswan Dam. The Soviets, in helping us in our industrialisation, might have hoped to build up a strong labour force which they expected to carry out a revolution along their lines, but this kind of development fitted our requirements well in those days.

What the United States can offer is a very expensive and discriminatory pattern of consumption and, though I have criticised many aspects of Soviet policy towards Egypt, their contribution was much better for our development. Nasir used to say that Egypt and the USSR could walk together for 50 per cent of the road, particularly for that part of the road that was needed to get rid of the colonial heritage and to put down the basis for industrial development. From that point onward our ways weren't the same any more.

Question: But several economists in the West say that only through close economic links with the U.S. can Egypt's problems be solved.

Answer: Not at all. Our first need is development in agriculture and industry and this can only take place within the framework offered by the Arab world. Ok, so the U.S. gives us \$1 billion a year. But I fail to see one single country where U.S. aid went into real development. We don't need to be flooded with Coca-Cola, Cornflakes or Kentucky chicken. In 1977 we received \$5.5 billion in foreign aid. \$4.5 came from Arab sources, and only one from the U.S. or U.S.-related bodies, such as the World Bank or the IMF. On top we have to pay back those loans.

There is only one class, and a small one, of people that make huge profits out of Cornflakes and the like. There are of course people who can afford to eat Cornflakes at breakfast or smoke cigars at press conferences, but they are not the ones that matter. The real decisions are matured elsewhere.

Question: The big dispute going on at the moment is whether the Camp David agreement will lead to stability or to destabilisation in the Middle East. What is your view?

Answer: Camp David as such is of little consequence. What will upset the area will be an effective separate peace between Egypt and Israel. And I

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don't think, as many do, that destabilisation will come from the possible breakdown of the peace negotiations. I see it as an internal Arab danger, not as an external threat, for at present there is no possibility of war with Israel. The inter-Arab quarrel that would stem from a separate peace could cause the greatest dangers to the whole area.

Question: But the Egyptian people seem to expect things to improve greatly for them, particularly at the socio-economic level, if there is peace. A disappointment could be very upsetting, don't you think?

Answer: I don't think so. Egypt's problems need more than a separate peace with Israel. The only chance for Egypt to solve its problems and to develop effectively lies in its connection with the Arab world. Nobody can replace the Arab world for Egypt, not even the United States. Furthermore, the United States will not give all that Egypt needs. Nobody, in fact, will give us as much--and on such easy terms--as the Arab world has given us between 1973 and 1977.

Question: Were you surprised to see Saudi Arabia take a different stand from al-Sadat on Camp David?

Answer: Not so much. One tends to divide everything into white and black blocs, as Nixon used to do. One thinks that a regime, being moderate, will accept any American diktat. And one overlooks that certain basic requirements are extremely important to the Saudis--Jerusalem, for one. The struggle for Jerusalem and getting Jerusalem back for the Arabs and Muslims legitimises the Saudi regime.

Nowhere in the Arab world are there people that would tolerate rulers who don't satisfy this minimum requirement. It is therefore central in Saudi thinking. They will never follow a line renouncing Jerusalem.

And, I tell you, the more the United States tries to pressure them, the more impetus will be gained by the destabilisation process in the area. We are all heading towards a very important and crucial period in time, the Saudis like the rest of us. There is a critical stage in development where you simply can't suddenly freeze it. I believe that overdue changes are going to happen in Saudi Arabia, and they would be accelerated by capitulation on Jerusalem.

Question: In a way the Camp David agreement and its follow-up have had a unifying effect on the Arab world--of course against Egypt--wouldn't you agree?

Answer: Yes, these developments have been leading to something of that sort. But Egypt has been central to the Arab world for centuries and its defection will have negative repercussions on the balance of power, whatever the others do, and will therefore lead to a more precarious situation.

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I want to say that I find it very strange that President Carter should have pushed so hard for a separate peace. In the past American administrations didn't believe in it, for they knew it would affect moderate policies in the area. I really can't understand such a line. Many believe that it is based on strong American internal needs and conditions. But how can a superpower sacrifice its global interests for transient domestic purposes?

Question: Most of the Western press seems to believe that in the end the conservative Arab states will accept Egypt's peace.

Answer: We in the Arab world very often fail to explain our point of view and existing realities. Things are much more complicated than opting for one policy or the other. Here we have a conflict between two civilisations for a piece of land, Palestine. But Palestine is not only a piece of land. It used to be the bridge between Asia and Africa. And Egypt has traditionally always looked east for an outlet. It tends east, and this is a historical necessity, and historical necessities must be respected. Everybody wants peace, but on what terms? At the risk of going against reality? The conservatives want to join Egypt, all right, but they won't join a peace that leads to a highly precarious situation. Any Tel Aviv-Cairo axis is impossible, artificial, absurd.

Question: In recent weeks al-Sadat has clearly stiffened his attitude. Article 6 of the Camp David agreement, which gives priority to peace with Israel over Egypt's commitments to the Arab world, became a major obstacle at one stage of the negotiations. Is this the result of the isolation imposed by the Arabs on al-Sadat?

Answer: Egypt has made mistakes. The fact that at a certain stage Egypt refused to accept Article 6 is a good sign. The chances to correct further mistakes are still there. In any case, I pray that this attitude is not only the result of Arab opposition prompted by the Baghdad Summit. I hope that it is the result of some real rethinking. And we have to sit down and think some more.

Question: What is your evaluation, in political and military terms of the revived "Eastern Front"?

Answer: The Eastern Front was always a very important component in the confrontation with Israel. But nobody should make the mistake of thinking that it is enough to have a confrontation on the Eastern Front. I think that the Eastern Front can achieve a certain independence and freedom of action, even without Egypt, but only in 10 to 15 years. What this front can do is a holding operation. Let's face it; the local balance of power since World War II was based on Iraq, Syria, with the Arabian peninsula on one side, and Egypt on the other.

As for the Baghdad Summit, I think that those who expected very much from it were mistaken. They were looking at things as they should be, not as

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they are. But what happened in Baghdad is nevertheless important, and it is important that Iraq and Syria found it necessary to overcome their feud, and that the countries of the Arabian peninsula found it imperative to back all this. This is going to start putting in place a new balance of power and new equations. But it will take the long time I mentioned before. In any case, with the human, political, economic and military potential of Syria, Iraq, Jordan and the Palestinians, backed by the Arabian peninsula, we will be able to finally have a viable and strong front.

Question: Do you think that the Palestinians have been given a fair chance of joining the peace progress?

Answer: Well, we'll have to see the peace agreement, which, however, to my mind is not a peace agreement. As to the texts that have been published so far, I don't think that they offer the Palestinians anything. I can't see that administrative self-rule means anything at all, especially in the light of the balance of power inside Palestine or around Palestine.

Question: So what options do they have?

Answer: You know what advice I give--as a friend--to everybody in the Arab world? We are going towards a very important turning point, and in front of such turning points, historically people tend to rush into action. If I am allowed, as a friend, to say anything, I would tell the Palestinians that we are facing a moment in history where we need to think before we decide on the course of action. All the Arab world needs to think. We are facing a situation that could lead to Egypt's isolation or to Egypt opting out of the Arab world, which would be a very dangerous thing for both Egypt and the Arab nation.

The Baghdad conference of the rejectionists was a success, because it showed an Arab position that does not accept the Camp David agreement; and took decisions pending the implementation of that agreement. It was a rejection and it was a warning to Egypt not to go it alone. More than that, it was a warning to the United States not to pursue this dangerous path. All of this was still on the passive side. After the signature of the peace you can implement what was decided upon in Baghdad. But the big question is: Then what? What we need is a viable Arab strategy before rushing into action. This was a necessity when Egypt was still there. It will be even more necessary without Egypt. Naturally there will be a tendency to condemn, accuse, insult. But this would be merely a hysterical reaction. What we need is a rational reaction. This is why the Palestinians and the whole Arab world must sit down and think what can be done, what aims we must have, for the short and long terms, and how we may reach them.

Question: But the dynamics of the situation seem to impose certain choices upon the Palestinians, for instance regarding the Palestinian state in the

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West Bank and Gaza. It has been reported that 'Arafat assured an American congressman that he is prepared to recognise Israel if he gets this state.

Answer: This is what this congressman said, but what have the Palestinians publicly stated? I think that if the Palestinians were offered an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza with a link between the two, as well as East Jerusalem, obviously everybody would tell them to go ahead and accept. This however is a mirage, a dream, not a concrete option.

Question: You have written that the United States is trying to replace the concept of an Arab world, with the concept of the Middle East, which envisages an alliance of Arab and non-Arab countries. Was one of the aims of Camp David to further promote this strategy?

Answer: Not only of Camp David. Ever since World War II America's aim has been to break up the Arab world by isolating Egypt from it. So far they have failed and I think that the objective conditions are such that they will continue to fail. I am always asked whether I think that the Soviets have learnt their lessons, but the real tragedy is that the United States has learnt nothing from the last 25-35 years.

Question: The concept of an Arab nation seems to be undergoing a change. Nationalism used to be the big driving force, whereas now several Arab regimes are trying to unite the Arabs around Islam.

Answer: I don't think that it has changed so much. Islam has always been and still is one of the ingredients of Arab nationalism. But it alone cannot create a nation. What makes a nation is not religion; it's a common language, a common mind, a common interest, a common culture, a common security. Religion is but one aspect of all this. In Malaysia too the people are Muslims, but what else do they have in common with the Egyptians? However, the idea of Islam as a unifying factor is not new. The idea of an Islamic commonwealth is a legacy of the Ottoman Empire and after the end of World War I, with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, it was superseded by the concept of nationalism.

In the developing world religion alone cannot be a progressive force. There must be other ingredients, such as independence, social emancipation and so on. But these ingredients don't appeal to certain forces in the area. The supremacy of religion is the result of an instinct of self-defence, to the point where Islamisation should neutralise Arab nationalism.

Question: But where, would you say, does the idea of an Arab nation exist today?

Answer: Everywhere in the Arab world, with the exception of some conservative leaders. Societies must organise their lives beyond religion and its rules. The period of religion-dominated societies is gone. Today we don't have a Christian entity, but Europe, which is something more tangible.

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Question: Would you say that today in Egypt there are forces at work that aim at the de-Arabisation of the country, by, for instance, stressing its Pharaonic heritage, or its African links?

Answer: Something happened in Egypt that was part of a general movement in the Arab world during various centuries. Muhammad 'Ali was the first who saw the need for an independent Egypt, for a different Egypt. At the end of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt went through a search for identity. It was the time of all the Pharaonic discoveries and Europe did its best to make the Egyptians feel that there was their identity. The Pharaonic legacy was the intellectual link with Europe. But 'Abd al-Nasir realised that our true identity was Arab. He made one mistake; this fact was not sufficiently discussed on a wider scale. It was taken for granted without helping it to sink into the consciousness of the masses, together with its socialist corollary.

Revisionism disputed this identity, particularly the classes that had been hit by our measures of nationalisation. In a way it is a good thing that the whole question is being discussed again. The final result will certainly assert our Arab identity and place it on a firmer base. The trouble is that, while doing so, we are losing time and introducing doubts about our Arab identity when we most need the awareness of this identity.

Question: Fifteen years ago Egypt came to the help of the revolutionaries in Yemen, against Western-backed feudalism. Today Egypt, after having intervened in Zaire, is reported to be in North Yemen again, but this time on the side of the conservatives.

Answer: I am not sure that Egypt is in North Yemen; I have no proof of this. Anyhow, I am very proud of our first intervention in Yemen. As to the second, I can only pray to God that we are not there.

Question: How do you think the upheavals in Iran will affect the Middle East?

Answer: I consider myself more or less a Nasserite. Therefore you can imagine what I feel about today's events in Iran. I wrote my first book on Iran, among other things. Of course, I can't tell what's going to happen, but I have the impression of being before a *deja-vu* situation. I was in Iran during the first anti-shah insurrection, in 1953. Now the conditions are very different. The popular forces learnt their lesson, they are better organized and more determined.

The historical friction that always existed between the Arab world and Iran has been accentuated by the shah and his policies. This is a pity. Even if there are contradictions, on the Gulf among other things, they could be contained. We are neighbours and should live together in peace. I am sure that if, as I pray, there won't be a prolonged military dictatorship in Iran, if things follow their right course, a time for real

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cooperation between Iran and the Arabs will come. And I hope that the Arab world will then be in a condition to use this great opportunity.

Question: How do you view your future role in Egyptian politics?

Answer: This is a difficult question. I really don't know. I have always tried to be a journalist, able to say everything I feel. This is still my ambition. Recently I have been offered many chances to go and work abroad. But for me there is no place if not in Egypt, whether at home, in the office, or in prison. Let's hope for the best.

Question: But somehow your position was a bit special. You were the closest adviser to President 'Abd al-Nasir.

Answer: You must understand that the situation of the press in the developing countries is different. Given the problems of the Middle East, you can't just be carriers of news. You are in the midst of events and, thus, you are obliged to take sides. Before your revolution there was a parliamentary debate in Iran which went against the shah. I reported this, adding but one little sentence: This is what happened in Iran. This caused me to be arrested for 24 hours, but, according to the law, I could have got 12 years. We are not as privileged as you here; we cannot afford to be detached. It's a matter of to be or not to be.

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EGYPT

AL-SADAT'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS OPPOSED; ATTEMPTED COUPS REPORTED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21 Dec 78 pp 16-18

[Article: "Al-Sadat in the Negotiations Cauldron: 'A Hot Pan and a Cold Pan'; Regime Escapes Two attempted Coups: One Failed Because officers' Intentions Were Misinterpreted; Al-Jamasi Was Removed from His Post Because He was Suspected of Covering Up the Second Military Attempt; the Predicament of Iran's Shah Is Making the United States Reconsider the Experience of Egypt's Shah"]

[Text] On the basis of information obtained from well-informed Egyptian sources AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI can confirm that two successive military attempted coups that sought to overthrow al-Sadat and his regime were among the principal reasons that led the Egyptian president to make up a crisis that he had agreed to beforehand with Washington over the linkage between a peace treaty with Israel and a schedule for autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza. This fabricated crisis served local political purposes in Egypt and in the Arab world. It sought to contain any resentment towards the concessions made by al-Sadat by means of making up "intransigent" position in accordance to the tactics of shifting from a "hot pan" to a "cold pan." Al-Sadat came upon this concept in the summary of book about the French-Tunisian negotiations by Mr Christian Pinaud the former French minister of foreign affairs. Naturally, the summary was the work of Dr Butrus Ghali the minister of state for foreign affairs.

Meanwhile informed observers are saying that al-Sadat is conducting himself in government and in official life as though he were the autocratic chief of a village in the remote areas of upper Egypt who rules according to his fancy.

It is on this basis, when his assistants began to be shaken by pessimism as a result of the media magnifying the news about the Israeli-Egyptian dispute and the news about Vance's faltering mission, that al-Sadat would assume the posture of a village chief in his palace at al-Qanatir al-Khayriyah [the Barrage]. He would reassure his assistants and the editor-in-chief of his newspapers, who were dismayed by the Egyptian-Israeli conflict which appeared to be brewing, that everything that was taking place was occurring according

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to a carefully drawn-up plan. He himself had suggested this plan to Carter who became enthusiastic about it and, after much effort, had persuaded Begin to go along with it up to a certain point. This plan is based on shifting the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations rapidly, continuously and without interruption from a cold pan to a hot pan for a certain period of time. Instances of pessimism and optimism with their increasing psychological pressures on all would ensue. If a peacy treaty containing the stipulations that were agreed upon in Washington were to be signed, everybody would have a sigh of relief and consider it "an accomplishment."

Al-Sadat said that it was the book by Pinaud, the former French minister of foreign affairs, that suggested this policy to him. Pinaud had said that the French and the Tunisians who negotiated the independence of Tunisia had adopted a plan "of continuously shifting the negotiations from a hot pan to a cold pan" by holding official sessions for the negotiations and then making up a crisis that they had agreed to beforehand. Afterwards, through unofficial communications and the mediation of third parties an announcement would be made that the crisis had been overcome. Then the door would be opened for the resumption of public official negotiations. Then another crisis would take place, and it would be followed by another shift to new negotiations and so on until an agreement granting Tunisia autonomy would be reached after having exhausted all the factions of Tunisian and Arab opposition. Ultimately, the entire matter would appear to have been a major victory that was very hard to pull off.

The Principles of al-Sadat's Analysis

Although there is a radical difference between the subject of Tunisia-France and that of Egypt-Israel, al-Sadat did adopt Christian Pinaud's tactics with Carter's approval. This was done to confront obstacles and difficulties that had not been taken into account when everybody sat down to draw up the terms of the Camp David deal.

During his chieftancy session at the al-Qanatir al-Khayriyah palace al-Sadat would identify to his assistants three levels of these obstacles and difficulties:

The first level of difficulty was that of the increasing opposition in Egypt to the Egyptian-Israeli agreement.

The second was that of absolute Palestinian rejection on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of the autonomy project.

The third level of difficulty was that of the Arab rejection of the Camp David accords. At the Baghdad Summit Conference this rejection produced a broad front that politically encompasses Iraq, Algeria, Syria, Libya, Democratic Yemen and the PLO as well as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

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The fact is that al-Sadat's supporters and the Mafia in the government of Egypt tried through their total control of all the media--television, radio and the press--to give the impression that all the Egyptian people, except for a small minority of leftists who are opposing Camp David on orders from Moscow [were supporting al-Sadat's efforts].

However, foreign journalists and observers in Egypt soon noticed that this "small minority of leftists who are Moscow's agents, according to al-Sadat's definition, were holding popular meetings under the name of the United National Progressive Grouping Party" and that thousands of citizens from Alexandria in the north to Aswan in the south were participating in these meetings. The foreign journalists and observers noticed that al-Sadat's regime and government were not able to tolerate the opposition of "this small minority of leftists." Government agencies were continuously confiscating their newspaper AL-AHALI. Afterwards, the state owned al-Ta'awun Publishing Firm, whose board of directors is chaired by Mr Mamduh Rida, was advised to cancel its contract to print and publish the newspaper on the basis of the fact that the newspaper was costing the publishing firm considerable damage and was hurting its reputation.

Opposition from the Right and from the Left

The observers noticed that the United National Progressive Grouping may have been the first to condemn the Camp David accords and the direct negotiations with Israel decisively and clearly. But they were not the only opposing force on the political scene. There were the Moslem Brothers with their three organizations and factions. They announced their firm opposition [to the accords and to the direct negotiations] on a religious and a political basis. They expressed their opposition clearly in the two newspapers AL-DA'WAH and AL-I'TISAM and also in the public prayers on feasts where they advocated such opposition at the square facing 'Abdin Palace which al-Sadat is using as the official seat of his regime.

There is also the Wafd party. Although the party decided to disband itself six months ago to protest the [government's] unconstitutional, terrorist, repressive measures and the political isolation of its leaders--these measures are contrary to the simplest rules of democracy--it is still operating and active on the political scene. With regards to Camp David the Wafd party is divided into two factions. The first one, which that of the majority, is strongly opposed to Camp David. It is led by Fu'ad Siraj al-Din who announced that Israel was Egypt's direct enemy just as it was Palestine's and that Egyptian security could not be separated from total Arab security. The second faction is led by Dr Muhammad Hilmi Murad member of the People's Assembly. Although this faction has not expressed its clear opposition to Camp David, it did submit 17 reservations which undermined the foundations upon which the Camp David accords are based.

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Liberals and national technocrats also, who are led by Murtaz Nassar a prominent attorney, a former president of the Lawyers' Club and member of the People's Assembly and Dr Engineer Mahmud al-Qadi member of the People's Assembly who is described as the most skillful contemporary Egyptian parliamentarian, are condemning the foundations of the Camp David accords and are considering their action to be the principal preface to their attempts to form a new party in Egypt under the name "National Front."

In addition, the movement to oppose Camp David and al-Sadat's policy, which does not serve national and pan-Arab interests, includes the independent Nasirists who are led by Kamal Ahmad, the only nasirist representative in the People's Assembly. This movement also includes all the communist organizations which are not legally permitted but which pursue their activities in secret. The number of these organizations amounted to six; most prominent among them are the Egyptian Communist Party, the Communist Labor Party and the 8 January Organization.

All the living members of the 23 July Revolutionary Council are going along with the opposition. They are 'Abd-al-Latif Baghdadi, Zakariya Muhi al-Din, Husayn al-Shafi'i and Kamal al-Din Husayn. The only one who did not go along with the opposition is Hasan Ibrahim who preferred to maintain silence and refused to sign his colleagues' statement so that al-Sadat would not attack his commercial interests. Two men who had served as prime ministers in al-Sadat's administration have also joined the opposition movement. They are Dr Mahmud Fawzi and Dr 'Aziz Sidqi. The third prime minister, Dr Hijzi, has kept his peace. But al-Sadat got the support of the former prime minister Mamduh Salim, a former investigative officer, who was rewarded by al-Sadat: he was removed from the ministry and appointed as al-Sadat's assistant. It is a "ceremonial" job, and the only work he has to do is accept on behalf of his "boss" the prizes that have been pouring on al-Sadat from Zionist and U.S. organizations.

The Ruling Mafia

It is thus that today all the vital and active forces on the Egyptian political scene are variously motivated to demonstrate various degrees of opposition to al-Sadat's policy of capitulation to Israel and the United States. These forces have cornered al-Sadat politically and have isolated him and the group that has benefited financially, economically and bureaucratically from his regime. According to official statistics issued by the Ministry of Planning in January 1977, this group of beneficiaries represents the interests of 2,353 families whose average size is five or six individuals. Thanks to the commercial openness each family earns an annual income that varies from 55,000 pounds to over 2 million pounds.

Squatting on top of the pyramid of the ruling Mafia families are al-Sadat's family; 'Uthman Ahmad 'Uthman; Sayyid Mar'i; 'Abd-al-Chaffar (the president's in-laws); Muhammad Shahin; Ahmad Sultan, the former vice president and minister of electricity who was accused in the United States of accepting

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a bribe; Dr Mustafa Khalil, the current prime minister who is considered one of the most prominent representatives in the Middle East of the well-known conglomerate ITT, the company that financed Chile's bloody coup against the government of Chile's late President Allende; Mahmud Abu Wafiyah, the president's brother-in-law and husband of Kamiliya, Jihan al-Sadat's sister.

This Mafia assumes political form in two parties. Al-Sadat is proud of having established them at the same time--according to him--by plowing the political mainstream. The ruling official majority party is the Democratic National Party; and the official opposition party is the Socialist Action Party. To lead this party al-Sadat chose his brother-in-law Mahmud Abu Wafiyah and Engineer Ebrahim Shukri the former minister of agriculture. The two parties tried to convene popular meetings under the slogan "Peace with Israel is the way to democracy and prosperity." But they soon suspended these meetings on orders from al-Sadat himself after it became clear that the masses were raising questions about the Camp David accords even though they were concerned in a primary degree about solving their accumulated economic and social problems whose tight grip was affecting undersecretaries of ministries, not to mention workers, farmers, junior and mid-level employees. These reservations were expressed with so much hostility that Fikri Makram 'Ibayd the secretary general of the president's party said they were "very disturbing."

And even inside the small circle of government observers noticed that all the members of the People's Assembly who participated in the discussion of the Camp David accords, especially supporters of the regime, were careful to underscore their reservations. This came about in view of a general trend in public opinion. People are becoming increasingly aware of the growing link between the fierce hardships of life they are experiencing and the economic openness policy and the political openness policy with Israel and the United States. The people have become aware of the fact that Camp David not only isolates Egypt from the Arab community, but it is also making it poorer and increasing the fierceness of its economic problems.

On a personal level some individuals who are close to al-Sadat were advising him to ponder the matter somewhat and to reconsider the situation. When this advice was repeated, al-Sadat became very angry and sharply accused his advisers of cowardice and disloyalty. Even his wife Jihan was not spared this accusation. She had conveyed to him observations opposed to the accords made by professors of the College of Arts where she recently graduated. Even Sayyid Mar'i the former speaker of the People's Assembly was accused of becoming the prisoner of his relations with some "leftists who are agents for Moscow and for the Palestinians." He was removed from his position as speaker and was replaced by "the exponent" of the new regime Sufi Abi Talib. [Meanwhile] Sayyid Mar'i cowered in the "presidential warehouse" like his arch enemy Mamduh Salim as an assistant to the president.

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Two Attempted Coups

There is also the position of the army. Well-informed sources affirm that there were two attempted coups against al-Sadat during the last six months.

The first attempt was carried out by a group of young officers. Their purpose was to kill al-Sadat and his assistants when they met at one of the meetings. Forty-eight hours before they were to carry out their plan, some of them contacted the Nasirist representative Kamal Ahmad and asked him to set up meetings for them with some nationalist politicians who belong to different factions. But the Nasirist representative suspected that the matter might be "a trap prepared for him by the investigative police." He reported the incident to the police who arrested those who planned the attempted coup. They were 63 officers, and the highest ranking officer among them was a colonel.

The second attempt was carried out by a group of mid-level and senior officers. There were major generals and brigadier generals among them. They distributed handbills inside the army in the name of the New Free Officers in which they condemned the policy of impoverishment and subordination to U.S. colonialism and Israel which is being pursued by al-Sadat. They criticized his military ventures against the Palestine Liberation Movement and against Libya and Africa.

It has been said that that attempt was reported by a pro al-Sadat secret organization in the army which is supervised by Husni Mubarak and that the investigations which included 14 officers who had been arrested led investigators to suspect that Lt Gen Muhammad 'Abd-al-Ghani al-Jamasi the former minister of defense and commander-in-chief did know about this organization and was covering up for it. This may have been the principal reason for his sudden dismissal from his position after the officers were arrested.

Some sources add that al-Jamasi had expressed his opposition to the position of "liberated Sinai" as stipulated by the Camp David accords with regard to Egypt's military security. Militarily speaking, Sinai would actually be under Israel's control. It seems that this view which al-Jamasi expressed on the question of Sinai was widely shared in the army and that Lt Gen Kamal Hasan 'Ali the new minister of defense had to inform al-Sadat about it.

In view of this internal situation in Egypt which constitutes the possibility that a broad opposition front may be established on the political scene on the basis of the opposition to Camp David; in view of the activities in the army; in view of the damage to the unity of the existing relations between al-Sadat and a number of people who are in close contact with him, al-Sadat did adopt the [alternating] "hot and cold" tactic in the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations to try gaining time, to prevent the formation of political and military opposition factions within a unified movement; and to appear to be the one who was drawing from Israel concessions that are consistent, at least in form, with the reservations of some people in his regime.

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Al-Sadat is also facing the problem of his open and secret pledge to go over the PLO's head as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. With leading personalities of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip he would create a united Palestinian-Egyptian force that would be capable of carrying out the [plan for] autonomy in accordance with the Camp David accords. When al-Sadat was confronted with the firm rejection of the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, he asked Carter and Begin for the freedom to maneuver to the point of making up imaginary crises with Israel about "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; the possibility of the Palestinians establishing their nationalist state in the future; and the possibility of linking the Sinai agreement with the autonomy agreement. He also asked them to support him financially and politically in his efforts to use all means to create in the occupied territory a climate that is favorable to Camp David.

According to the most confidential sources Carter has expressed his understanding for "al-Sadat's difficult position" and has supported all his demands. Begin, however, expressed serious reservations over what is called al-Sadat's freedom to maneuver. He based his reservations on the fact that this would create serious problems for him inside Israel. He did, however, approve of the financial and political support for al-Sadat's action inside the occupied land in the attempt to recruit some mercenaries who would support the formula of autonomy.

Egyptian Action on the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank

It was in this context that al-Sadat escalated his campaign to link the Egyptian-Israeli agreement with the autonomy agreement and to affirm at the same time--in order to reassure Begin--that regardless of the circumstances he would not abandon the letter and the spirit of the Camp David accords. He also obtained monetary financial support from the United States estimated at 60 million dollars, and he obtained political support from Begin that took the form of travel facilities for about 12 or 15 Egyptian intelligence officials who would travel to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the guise that they were Egyptian businessmen. They would work under the leadership of Col Mahasin who has close personal contact with al-Sadat. It is said that he is the cousin of Vice President Husni Mubarak.

The purpose of this mission is "to buy some prominent personalities in the occupied homeland: by financing a number of joint projects with Egypt, especially in the area of trade transactions. These would later spread to Israel. Consequently, "new interests" would be formed that would be favorable to and harmonious with the autonomy and would at the same time be inconsistent with the course of the revolution which is represented by the Liberation Organization.

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Information from knowledgeable sources indicates that this mission did actually begin about a month and a half ago. But it seems that this mission is severely floundering and has not yet achieved, according to Prime Minister Mustafa Khalil, as he told Carter when he visited Washington recently, the required minimum. It seems that the matter requires more time, more support and deeper Israeli understanding for the objectives and means of the mission.

The unity of all political and social trends in the Arab homeland which was produced by the Baghdad Summit Conference with regard to rejecting the Camp David accords and all their pertinent implications and results intensified al-Sadat's crisis. This matter was the furthest from the calculations of the Camp David people who had basically depended on al-Sadat's analysis. He had stated that he was capable of attracting the Arab oil countries at least to follow in his footsteps and to isolate and surround the progressive countries. Hence the resolutions of the Baghdad Summit Conference did produce a stunning blow to al-Sadat, to Carter and to Begin.

In view of this too al-Sadat was asking his two Camp David partners to give him more time and freedom to maneuver and to use the "hot and cold" tactics in an attempt to bring about division in the Baghdad front and to break the siege of Arab isolation from his regime.

However, observers are noticing that in spite of or perhaps because of the hot and cold tactics, al-Sadat is aggravating the historical crisis in which he is floundering.

Sources close to the U.S. embassy in Cairo are stating that in view of facts and reactions that have emerged after the Camp David accords in Egypt, in the occupied land and in the Arab world, Washington was reconsidering the capability of al-Sadat and his regime to continue on the Camp David course and to implement it. Today, the factual view of al-Sadat at the White House is that al-Sadat is the one who is torturing himself and his regime with his acrobatic shifts from a hot pan to a cold pan. The question now requires serious thinking about another al-Sadat.

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EGYPT

LEFTIST LEADER DISCUSSES HARASSMENT BY REGIME

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Dec 78 pp 18-20

[Interview with Khalid Muhi al-Din by Salah Hashim: "The Unofficial Opposition in Egypt: Khalid Muhi al-Din; Government Has Lost Respect of People; We Reject the Camp David Accords and We Believe that Egyptian Character of Egypt Is Confirmed Through Its Arab Character; There Is Not One Person in the National Party (al-Sadat's Party) Who Would Support Him in a Crisis; We Admit There are Differences over the Palestinian Question Within the Grouping Party Between the Pan-Arabists and the Marxists"]

[Text] The court sessions to try the defendants who were accused of creating the disturbances of the 18th and 19th of January 1977 are raising important questions about the reality of current Egyptian political life and about the opposition under President al-Sadat's regime which is pursuing an increasingly individualistic trend. President al-Sadat's regime is trying to contain any open or secret opposition; it is trying to smother it in its early stages or contain it in a manner that would prevent it from being heard by the masses and from affecting their inclinations.

Opposition to the Egyptian regime still constitutes an unknown quantity whose effectiveness and strength cannot be determined until all the conditions for testing this strength are completed as a result of an internal crisis that would affect the citizen's daily bread or the sources of his security. This is because the opposition movement has in most cases chosen silence; there is the labor opposition that expresses itself in union unrest; there is the opposition of some factions of the Moslem Brothers; there is the opposition of the rightist religious groups that are resisting any concessions on Jerusalem and Palestine; there is the communist opposition that is working in secret and is trying to infiltrate different opposition groups; and there is the silent opposition in the armed forces. This opposition began to emerge in different forms and precipitate actions which led to arrests, releases and extensive transfers.

As there is an official opposition which was appointed by al-Sadat by law. It is represented in the Socialist Action Party which has become the source and the butt of jokes.

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The only open opposition that has scrapes with the regime and has maintained its resilience is that which lies in the Grouping Party that is led by Mr Khalid Muhi al-Din.

In an attempt to clarify the true nature of this opposition and to evaluate its true strength before the agencies attack them--and observers expect this to take place soon--the correspondent of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI Salah Hashim conducted this interview with Mr Khalid Muhi al-Din, a reporter [himself] and president of the Grouping Party. In his answers to the following questions he presented significant facts about the party, the opposition and the current political life.

Letter to the Ministry of the Interior

[Question] Police and intelligence agencies intervened to prevent the commemoration of Palestine Day at party headquarters. You complied with the orders of the minister of interior, and the meeting was broken up even before it was held. Don't you think that this position will incite the leftist forces outside the Grouping to rally against you because your party was avoiding a confrontation with the government, avoiding making it angry and submitting to its orders?

[Answer] I am asking you to read the letter that we wrote to the minister of the interior. I believe that we stated our case fully. The forms of opposition differ and vary from one situation to another. It is the party that determines when to enter into a confrontation with the government. It is careful to give good consideration to circumstances. I believe that not since the age of the first liberalism in Egypt has a political party sent the minister of the interior such a candid letter. We know how angry he is with this letter which we printed and distributed in large quantities to news agencies, correspondents of world newspapers, members of the People's Assembly and ordinary citizens. It was also distributed to the newspapers. This letter expresses a very disdainful and a very harsh position against this decision. Reading the text of the letter will indicate this.

Your Excellency, the Minister of the Interior

Greetings

The United National Progressive Grouping Party received notice from one of your assistants that he had orders from his superiors to cancel the observance of International Palestine Solidarity Day which was to be held Thursday evening December 7, 1978 at party headquarters.

Whereas the party regrets and rejects that large numbers of your policemen gathered in the street leading to the party's headquarters to carry out the decision to cancel the observance; and whereas the party views this cancellation as a blatant violation of the party law which gives party headquarters [certain] immunity determined by law, the party wishes to put the following matters on record:

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First, those who issued the decree to prohibit observance of International Palestine Solidarity Day which was declared by the United Nations and observed by it are only placing themselves in a curious position vis a vis the national and pan-Arab question and the statements and interviews about the Palestinian question that abound in the newspapers.

Second, the fact that your policemen have violated the law--in fact, they derided the law when we reminded them of it--indicates that a real threat to the laws which must be respected and abided by does exist. This is because the habitual violation of the law by policemen is a very serious and dangerous matter. It begins with a step or a position which if opposed becomes [a matter of] public policy from whose consequences no one is immune.

Third, if some people imagine they can easily disregard the law, past and recent experiences affirm that time moves in cycles and that the law will in time regain its power no matter how long that span of time may be. The law is always capable of holding people accountable.

Finally, Your Excellency Mr Minister, we are making these quick observations as we hold on to all our constitutional and legal rights that were deliberately violated by your policemen. We want to mention in closing that this is not a letter of protest. This letter is a reminder; memory may perhaps be useful to the faithful.

God will provide guidance.

The United National Progressive Grouping Party

The Rules of the Grouping Party

[Question] Some are saying that the fact that the Grouping Party has not identified its social identity has caused it numerous problems with the Egyptian Government. To what extent has the Grouping Party succeeded in mobilizing the labor forces that it has the power to represent, and what is the role that you are assuming at the present time?

[Answer] Let me first explain two points. First, it is difficult to say that there is now in Egypt one Egyptian party that represents the interests of the working class only. This is because we cannot separate, especially during a stage like that which we are experiencing, between the interests of the working class and the interests of the other classes.

Second, ideological membership in a party--any party--is a relative matter. Practical experience in Egypt has proven that people join a party first, and then they understand its ideology afterwards and not vice versa as is the case in Europe. In Egypt one joins the Communist party and then becomes a Marxist; and one joins the Moslem Brothers and then understands their beliefs.

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The actual reality about the Grouping Party affirms the following: the total number of Marxists, Nasirists, pan-Arabists and all other ideological components inside the party represent approximately 10 percent [of party members]. The rest are ordinary citizens who criticize the government policy and the policies of the government. They generally criticize the methods, approaches, priorities and directions of the government in Egypt. It is possible to consider these people Grouping Party members. They constitute the majority of the party's mid-level cadres, and they are also capable of determining the general course of the party's action.

We are the only party in Egypt that is based on elections from the base unit to the top. It is through the process of preparing for the party's general conference and through its democratic practices that different factions deal with each other within the party without any friction. The leadership does not select, discriminate or favor one faction as opposed to another. We welcome any faction that wins in the elections.

From the organization's central office we observe the course of events and we correct their balance by giving other political factions an opportunity to be represented whether or not they obtained a majority of the vote. The fact that 51 percent, 52 percent or even 90 percent of one faction are represented does not mean that representation for the remaining 10 percent is to be cancelled. This is because the presence of the 10 percent is also legitimate, necessary, urgent and pertains to the party. Hence, we resort to the method of representing the other factions that were not represented in the elections.

Differences Within the Party

[Question] Can it be said that the sharp differences that could develop between the different political factions within the party on a specific issue like President al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem or the party's position on the Camp David agreement do not impair the existing balance and impede the progress of the party?

[Answer] First, we have not had a difference that split the party. In case such a difference does occur, every faction is to make some concessions. There have been differences that no one can deny. They are differences between the pan-Arab view of a solution to the Palestinian question and the Marxist view of this solution. Some Nasirists may agree on this subject with some pan-Arab factions. For example, when we established the party we had a difference about UN Resolution 242 and about the Geneva Conference. On the other hand, there was a difference about how the full liberation of Palestinian soil was to come about. But we were all able to approach one idea which different factions could agree upon even if they did not subscribe fully to it or to this position or the other. This means that we find the formula upon which all parties can agree without all these parties being fully satisfied.

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We have, for example, spoken about the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and of their right to establish their state on those parts of their land that are liberated. We did not say this was final, and we did not say it was not. Instead, we said if they can liberate their land, let them establish their state on it. And at the same time we said that we recognized that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. From the point of view of the Marxist elements in the party this means a commitment to the statements of the Palestinian people. This is because there are no people or natural powers who have the right to claim to speak on behalf of another people or another natural power. This means that if the PLO says it accepts a certain solution, we can only in this case accept what the PLO says because speaking for people is not an ideological luxury that I expect of my opponents and do not practice myself.

We support principles, and we determine them. Among the principles is the right for self-determination of the Palestinian people. If the Palestinian people choose a course and an approach, we support them. I believe that this would solve many of the disputes that emerge.

The Party, Defamation Campaigns and News Blackout

[Question] What posture is the Grouping Party taking vis a vis the defamation and blackout campaigns that are launched by the governmental press in Egypt against it and against its role on the Egyptian political scene?

[Answer] The ruling party's position on the Grouping Party has changed from one stage to another. The first stage was one of dissatisfied acceptance; that is, it was a de facto acceptance of us. This acceptance was accompanied by the ruling party's displeasure that we were not up to forming a responsible opposition, an opposition that they call honest, that is, a skeleton of an opposition or an opposition in form.

The second state [of the ruling party's posture towards us] assumed the form of blatant attack against us. But the regime failed in both cases. I think that the media campaigns to which the party was subjected were intended to harm it. They have been unprecedented in Egypt's history.

Yes, we were sharply and impudently attacked. Nevertheless, this attack produced a very strange result. The party's popularity appeal increased for a very simple reason: the government has lost the respect of the public and the government's propaganda machinery has not been successful.

For example, during the events of January 1977 the genius of the government media contrived to place the responsibility for the popular uprising on us. They tried to portray this uprising as "an uprising of thieves."

But the attack against the party only aroused the derision of the masses who had no longer any respect for the media agencies and for the authors or writers who write and attack without having the public's confidence.

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Hence, the ideal solution--this is what the government thought--was to make the masses forget the Grouping Party. This meant that all discussion of the party in the newspapers would cease. No mention, either good or bad, would be made of it and the masses would forget that there was a Grouping Party. The government tried to stop the natural processes whereby the opposition would give vent to its views in the newspapers AL-AHALI and in the conference of the masses. A vicious campaign was launched to intimidate members of the Grouping Party so they would stop boasting about being members. There were 150,000 members who talked in side-walk cafés about the harassment they were subjected to by government agencies. The means must be found to silence those people so as to diminish the common feelings that exist between the party and the masses. It is my opinion that this nation is both intelligent and stupid. It is intelligent in so far as it achieves temporary results and calms the nerves of the ruling gentlemen who imagine that the matter had ended completely for the Grouping Party and that the party, thank God, had gone forever. It neither moves, acts nor publishes a magazine; it does not hold its conference for the masses; and we are making no mention of it. Then it follows that the Grouping Party is no more

Does not this position resemble that of the ostrich which hides its head in the sand?

The Grouping Party is a nationalist progressive party that does not depend on outside forces or on motivating agencies. It is a party that does depend on collecting its power from the power of its 150,000 members--even if that power were small. It organizes its members and draws from them a large strong tool with which it can take action among the masses. We are strong even without AL-AHALI newspaper. It is enough for us that we mobilize 150,000 fighters among the Egyptian people who spread their views in the midst of the living reality. It is enough for us to say that as far as the masses are concerned no when a problem surfaces and emerges, the ordinary citizens asks, what is the opinion of the left?

This is enough for us. The left expresses its opinion verbally, on a small piece of paper no larger than one's palm, or in statements, conferences or party debates. The question is not one of a comparison between us and government agencies. The government owns three daily newspapers, and it owns weekly magazines; it owns radio, television and other media. The ordinary citizen in Egypt now can read a daily newspaper regularly for a whole year without noticing any truth in it. Such a newspaper cannot have any effect on this citizen, and the model for that is evident.

Government agencies have all the capabilities, but I did not have anything when I published AL-AHALI, which is the only newspaper in the history of Egypt that did not pay one millieme to an editor. Everyone who wrote for the newspaper did so as a volunteer, and everyone who worked on the newspaper worked as a volunteer. Nevertheless, its circulation was 150,000

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and that is the total circulation of ROSE AL-YUSUF, SABAH AL-KHAYR, AL-MUSAWWAR, OCTOBER, AL-AHRAR and MISR. The circulation of these magazines depends in a large on government subscriptions and public sector subscriptions. Why is this so?

This experience has given us the opportunity to perceive the possibilities of our movement even under a news blackout. We are now publishing a bulletin, AL-TAWADDUM [Progress]. Nevertheless, I maintain that AL-TAQADDUM scares the government in spite of the fact that it is formembers only and is printed on a small humble press in numbers that are not many and aslo not few. However, we do succeed in issuing it regularly every Wednesday. Every Wednesday eveing, it can be found in Aswan, Qina, Alexandria, Damietta and Port Said.

Our ability to carry out this organized action which also depends on the enthusiasm of members gives the masses a sense of the Grouping Party's sincerity. If, as they say, we are an insignificant group without offices or media tools, let us ask together what do the others have? I say nothing.

What can a member of the Nationalist Party tell the ordinary public? I say he can tell them nothing.

The practical experience which has earned for the members of the Grouping Party the respect of the public has proven that the other parties have nothing but those cadres which ravaged the country and became a burden on its administrative agency. They are the same cadres that transfer ed their loyalty very simply (and perhaps naively) from the leaders of the Socialist Union to the leaders of the May Movement. Then they transferred their loyalty to the Misr Party and then to the new party, the Nationalist Party.

But if the Egyptian rulers believed that there would be one person in the Nationalist Party who would support them in a crisis, I think they would be suffering from a major misconception.

He went on to say:

Our party has withstood cruel experiences.

In January 1977 we had 120,000 members. During that month 2,000 of them were imprisoned, or 2 percent of the total members. They were charged with disorderly conduct or inciting isorderly conduct. But the party, neverthe- less, continued to cling to its positions. Its organizational structure was continuously becoming stronger, and its organizational capabilities were increasing. It was treating the governmental pressures with disdain. These pressures are quite numerous and very bitter and assume the forms of the arbitrary transfer of officials who are suspected of being members of the Grouping Party. For example, they tried to evacuate all employees who are Grouping Party members from Port Said and transfer them suddenly to remote towns.

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One of those who was moved from his position to another came to us to attend the meeting of the constituent agency. He said, "I congratulate you because I was transferred to Safajah from Port Said so I established a party chapter in Safajah. I hope they will continue their favor to me and transfer me to another place so we can complete laying down the organizational structure of the party in other areas.

The process of presenting the ideological opposition is a dangerous game and a double-edged sword because, first, it scares other parties of the opposition. There are those who have disappeared from the scene because they felt that if they said less than we were saying, they will be subjected to less than what we are subjected to. And they are not at all ready to subject themselves to a little or to a trifling amount of what we are being subjected to.

It is for this reason that other opposition parties like the Free [Citizens'] Party disintegrated. The Free [Citizens'] Party tried to publish AL-AHRAR magazine, but government agencies prohibited its publication. When the students' branch of the party published AL-HAQIQAH [The Truth] magazine, it was confiscated, and its publishers took no action. This is the kind of opposition that the regime wants. Today nobody can say that there is a party called the Free [Citizens'] Party. It is expected that the Socialist Action Party whose opposition to the regime, it is said, does not exceed the limits of honest opposition will be subjected to one of two situations: either its destiny will be the same as that of Mustafa Kamil Murad* or its destiny will be similar to ours. It does not have any other solution.

[Question] Are you thinking about resuming publication of AL-AHALI?

[Answer] We believe that the Egyptian character of Egypt is part of its Arab character. We don't find any inconsistency here. The real Egyptian character of Egypt is the real Arab character of Egypt. Any claim that there is an inconsistency between Egypt and the Arabs is a fabrication that is theoretically and politically erroneous.

Some rulers imagined that it was possible to say that the Arab character was burdensome to Egypt. They said we fought three times for the Arabs: we sacrificed and we worked a great deal for the Arabs. We sacrificed our blood, and they sacrificed money. In fact, some of them were not ashamed to say that they--i.e., the Arabs--did not pay us the money in a good, satisfactory manner. Instead, they spent it in nightclubs, resorts and dance halls.

*Mustafa Kamil Murad was appointed leader of the official opposition at the suggestion of Jihan al-Sadat. In this capacity President al-Sadat gave him a private office in the People's Assembly.

The recent simple experience has proven that the Arab character was not burdensome to Egypt. Quite the contrary, the Egyptian regime did not become stronger after it got rid of this burden; it grew weaker.

Most certainly Egypt did not become stronger when it set aside the burden of the Arab character. It did not spring lightly when it set aside the Arab character as someone would spring lightly and heave a sigh of relief after setting aside his heavy burden.

It is our view that the Arab Egyptian direction is a question of destiny. Just as much as Egypt cannot relinquish the Arabs, the Arabs cannot relinquish Egypt. We reject all attempts which different parties resort to create a barrier that would isolate Egypt from the other Arab countries, and we think that it is not in anyone's power, nor is it anyone's right to try and separate Egypt from the Arabs. This process is no longer in the hands of the rulers. In spite of what some people are careful to spell out, the Egyptian citizen is more aware of this matter now.

We Reject the Camp David Accords

[Question] What is the party's position on the Camp David accords?

[Answer] Out of its sense of national responsibility and its sense of its pan-Arab obligations, our party is announcing its rejection of the Camp David accords. It is announcing that it is continuing its opposition to the policy of separate Egyptian-Israeli negotiations and whatever results these negotiations may produce. Our party is asking that Egypt and the Arab countries adhere to the approved Arab positions. Chief among these are the al-Rabat resolutions. Our party is calling for suspension of the separate talks with Israel and is also calling upon the Arab confrontation countries and forces to hold an urgent meeting that would pave the way for an Arab conference. It is asking that there be the broadest possible dialogue on the Egyptian and Arab arena. It is asking that all political factions in Egypt, especially the opposition, be guaranteed an opportunity to express their opinions freely for the purpose of actually participating in formulating the final resolution.

It is also calling upon the nationalist Arab forces within the Arab front, which they share with the Palestinian revolution, to conduct a dialogue immediately that would mobilize the forces of the Arab nation for the purpose of overcoming the general negative aspects of the situation and achieving the common unity of action in the struggle that would be capable of initiating and taking action. It is also asking that oil be used as a political weapon along with other weapons to achieve Arab goals, especially with regard to Jerusalem, in opposition to the American-Israeli conspiracy.

The party is calling upon the noble al-Azhar and the Egyptian church to fulfill their religious and pan-Arab responsibilities; to defend the Moslem-Christian Arab character of Jerusalem; and to oppose the Zionist

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plot to turn it into a completely Jewish city. It is also calling upon Egypt's three ministers of foreign affairs who resigned to protest this approach of direct negotiations with Israel and the Camp David accords to testify in public sessions of the People's Assembly about the full data and information that led them to resign and to explain their position to Egyptian and Arab public opinion.

Falling back upon the Egyptian people with all their political tendencies in these decisive moments is the only way to make every Egyptian citizen--regardless of his orientation--bear his historical responsibility before the country becomes entangled in the final signing of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel that would have dire consequences on the future of the entire Arab homeland.

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EGYPT

SECRET SUPPLEMENTS TO CAMP DAVID ACCORDS UNCOVERED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Dec 78 pp 16-17

[Article by Shafiq al-Hut: "Secret Supplements to Camp David Accords: Israel Is To Have Air Cover in Case of War with Arab Countries"]

[Text] U.S. diplomacy is making desperate efforts to contain the double dispute.

1. The Egyptian-Israeli dispute regarding the conditions for signing a separate peace treaty.
2. The U.S.-Israeli dispute which is the result of Israeli intransigence that took Washington by surprise. This Israeli intransigence stems from the Israeli allegation that existing U.S. bias was sorrying President al-Sadat.

In order to contain this double dispute and keep it from turning into a gap through which embarrassing secrets about the Camp David accords may be leaked, U.S. diplomacy is trying to arrange a tripartite impromptu meeting in Brussels between the United States, Egypt and Israel during the travels of U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in Europe. This would be a last-ditch effort to revive the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations and to protect the Camp David arrangements that pertain to the secret political map of the Middle East. This is the map that proposed in accordance with the "U.S. peace plan" which is based on a separate peace between Egypt and Israel.

In spite of all precautions the broad outlines of these momentous U.S. plans began to leak in the form of information from confidential sources about the contents of the secret protocols that were attached to the Camp David accords. This information appears logical in light of the standards of the American view of the Middle East problem. In spite of superficial variables, these standards have a permanent core.

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It has been observed that ever since the Camp David accords were signed, U.S. diplomacy has been carrying out an energetic campaign, which has been described as unprecedented in the history of the State Department, for the purpose of gaining approval and international support for these two agreements. In addition to the swift action that characterized this campaign and the enormous media resources that it had at its disposal, the purveyors of the State Department used most of their resources according to the needs and the conditions of the party with whom they were talking. They would sometimes tempt and at other times threaten the international community.

Due to the opening of another session of the UN General Assembly U.S. activity reached a peak during the month of October. A large number of senior world diplomats were in New York to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly.

Cyrus Vance, who had chosen to stay at the UN Plaza Hotel, which is only 200 meters from UN headquarters, was like the mother of the bride on the eve of her daughter's wedding. He was hardly along even when he ate; all his meals--breakfast, lunch and dinner--were working meals during which he would explain and advocate the Camp David accords which he regards as the achievement that distinguishes him from his arch enemy Zbigniew Brezezinski. It was the Camp David accords that promoted him to the opposition of the president's first adviser.

People who are close to Vance say that he is a "good salesman" and that in view of the fact that he was originally an attorney, he is a good conversationalist and can say what will please his audience without conceding anything to them.

In the context of arousing his interest Vance met with an Arab diplomat who is known for his contacts with the PLO and his persistent efforts to lay bridges between Washington and the organization.

Vance began by telling his diplomatic friend, "I know beforehand what you will tell me. Without the Palestinians and without a solution to their problem, permanent peace will not be achieved. I agree with you on this and, even more, I will confess to you that I don't want anything more now than to meet with the Palestinians and explain to them the matter to prepare for their participation in the ongoing process."

When the Arab diplomat told him that a meeting with the Palestinians signified a meeting with the PLO because it is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, Vance replied apologetically, or perhaps he was pretending to be apologetic:

"But I cannot do that. What can I do on this matter in particular when my predecessor" (referring to Kissinger) "tied our hands with the commitment he made in the name of our country?"

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Then Vance turned to Harold Saunders a senior State Department official and expert on Arab affairs who was attending this meeting and asked him "innocently:"

"Is there anything we can do?" Saunders shook his head to indicate that there wasn't anything that could be done and said, "If the Israelis were to hear about what's being said here, they would go out of their minds!"

The rest of the dialogue that took place is not relevant because what I want to ascertain is whether or not Vance, while complaining about Kissinger to justify his position, was not at the same time playing the role that his predecessor had played during the Sinai agreements. In other words I want to ascertain that Vance too did not provide "some secret supplements" as payoff for the Camp David accords just as Kissinger had done previously.

We all remember what was said in the days of the second Sinai agreements about the existence of secret supplements, and we remember statements that were issued to deny their existence. These denials were later proven to be false.

And these days are like the others: there is talk about secret supplements but we have not heard anything to deny or to confirm their existence. They are as follows:

First, Between the United States and Israel

1. U.S. airplanes will provide air cover to Israel in case a new war breaks out between it and any confrontation country--or group of countries--which opposes the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. If the Soviet Union were to interfere on behalf of these countries, Washington would put its troops on alert and would be ready to undertake a venture in opposition to Moscow.
2. The U.S. government agrees to use its influence to prevent western weapons from reaching Arab countries that are opposed to the Camp David accords.
3. During the next five years (those that were determined as a transition period to explore the destiny of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) the U.S. government will supply Israel with loans amounting to 5 billion dollars. In addition, the Israeli armed forces will be supplied with very advanced weapons, especially airplanes and missiles which have not yet been made available to NATO countries. Such a commitment naturally requires the approval of the U.S. Congress.
4. The United States will try to persuade its western allies to support the Camp David accords, and it will encourage Third World countries to resume their relations with Israel which had been suspended after the '56, the '67 and the '73 wars.

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5. U.S.-Israeli negotiations for a common defense pack are to continue. This agreement which will provide U.S. guarantees for Israel's security will definitely be accomplished before the end of 1983.

6. Cooperative arrangements are to be made to liquidate the radical elements in the PLO and to turn it into a "peaceful" organization.

Second, Between the United States and Egypt

1. Negotiating an agreement that would enable about 5,000 military advisers and technicians to assist in the organization and the training of the Egyptian armed forces.

2. Egypt will be given U.S. military protection in case of any conflict between it and one of its neighbors. In case of war with Libya the Egyptians can depend on U.S. intervention on their behalf.

3. In order to prevent the creation of any strong alliance between its Arab opponents, the United States will support Egypt in actions to instigate local struggles that would reduce the pressure on President al-Sadat.

4. President Carter's administration will exert every pressure possible on moderate Arabs to gain their support for the Camp David accords or at least to obtain their support for a separate peace between Egypt and Israel. The Ashington government also committed itself to persuade the Arab oil countries to continue providing Egypt with financial support in the neighborhood of 4 billion dollars annually.

5. The United States will supply the Egyptian army with modern weapons to guarantee its defense capability and to enable it to intervene in Third World countries that may be threatened by internal revolutions or international communism.

6. The United States and Egypt will strengthen the cooperation between their intelligence agencies in the United States and in Egypt so as to enable al-Sadat to receive regular information about local and international events and occurrences that affect his policy.

7. The United States will help Egypt establish a "Marshal Plan" with U.S. and western financing. It will provide Egypt with several billions of dollars over the next five years.

Third, Between Egypt and Israel

1. A joint military political agency is to be established to confront any actions undertaken or instigated by the Arab countries that oppose the Camp David accords.

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An actual military alliance between Israel and Egypt will be established after Israel withdraws from Sinai; the bases of this alliance will be determined before that time.

2. In the case of conflict between Israel and any Arab country or group of countries, Egypt will not interfere against Israel. In addition, al-Sadat's government will help the Israelis uncover terrorists' bases wherever these may be for the purpose of liquidating them.
3. An agency for cooperation between the intelligence agencies in the two countries is to be established for the purpose of sharing information that affects the security of both countries. This agency will have eight liaison offices: four in Europe, two in Asia; one in the United States and one in Africa.
4. Egypt and Israel will take joint measures to force Syria to leave Lebanon in 12 months.
5. Egypt commits itself to stop insisting on giving the PLO a role in determining the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It commits itself to encouraging efforts to establish a "third power" that is made up of Palestinians who are willing to cooperate and who can accept the Camp David accords.
6. "Ties of friendship" between the Egyptian and the Israeli armies are to be reinforced through an exchange program for officers. This program will be designed when diplomatic mission begin in carrying out their functions.

If the existence of such supplements is proven, and most probably they do exist because what they contain is consistent with what is contained in the proclaimed accords, this would mean that the U.S. conspiracy against the Arab cause is not the exclusive province of any U.S. administration in particular or a specific president. It is not a matter of policy with one party and not the other, nor of a certain secretary of state. This conspiracy is a constant and a continuing position which constitutes the backbone of the American regime's policy whose monopolistic economic interests require that it pursue a colonialist, racist policy regardless of what its fronts and its writers claim about its commitment to democracy and to human rights.

If Kissinger committed the United States to deny recognition of the PLO and not to talk with it, it is Vance who, while complaining about his predecessor, is committing his country to liquidate the organization from its base.

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And then... There is nothing surprising or astonishing in these supplements between Israel and the United States. But what breaks one's heart are those supplements between Egypt and the two historical enemies. Is it true that al-Sadat did sign such papers?

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IRAQ

TOP-LEVEL DELEGATION VISITS SOVIET UNION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 Dec 78 pp 30-33

/Article: "Saddam Husayn on a Historic Trip of Solutions"/

/Text/ An element of surprise accompanied the trip which Mr Saddam Husayn, vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, made on a sudden long-range international move that took him to Moscow, and, also suddenly, from the frosts of Moscow to Havana, the warm Cuban capital which he left without forewarning to surprise Baghdad with his return at an early hour on Monday morning after an exhausting 14-hour flight between Havana and Baghdad.

However, the real surprise, according to what informed sources relate, lies in the results Mr Saddam Husayn achieved on the international and Arab levels and in the context of consolidating Iraqi-Syrian defense capacity. These are results which will be revealed when the time comes.

Mr Saddam Husayn's visit to Moscow was shrouded in political circumstances which assumed a dramatic character in the context of Iraqi-Soviet relations in particular and Soviet-Arab relations in general. The Soviets did not completely understand or digest the legal procedures which overtook the Communist personnel who tried to violate the terms of the National Compact in Iraq in order politically to infiltrate the Iraqi army. Clouds of blame were still gathered in the firmament of Iraqi-Soviet relations, in spite of the fact that the two parties agreed to consider what had happened as a passing matter.

Issues were hanging somewhat as regarded the response to the requests for supplying arms to the Iraqi army--requests on whose account the Iraqi minister of defense, the Revolutionary Command Council member Staff Lt Gen Mr 'Adnan Khayrallah, traveled to Moscow, where his presence coincided with that of Maj Gen Hikmat Shihabi, chief of war staff of the Syrian army on a similar visit which assumed a crisis-wracked character because of a dispute over the interpretation of paragraphs in previous agreements on the arms Syria needed to consolidate its national defense in the light of changes in Egypt's departure from the front of confrontation with Israel.

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The Syrian-Soviet Misunderstanding

The Syrian-Soviet difference in viewpoint appeared openly when Maj Gen Hikmat Shihabi decided to terminate his visit to Moscow and return to Damascus, once it had become clear that the agenda which had been prepared for him in Moscow involved no working meeting with Marshal Ustinov, the Soviet minister of defense, as opposed to the program set forth for Staff Lt Gen 'Adnan Khayrallah, which involved a number of working meetings with Marshal Ustinov.

These developments occurred at a time when the movement toward union between Iraq and Syria had become a strategic fact in the Arab world. Consequently it was not reasonable that Iraq should pretend to disregard the Syrian-Soviet misunderstanding, especially since it dealt with the defense aspect of Syrian military power at a time when agreement had been reached to close the Egyptian breach in the confrontation front through total Iraqi military participation with Syria.

Thus the matter of Syrian-Soviet relations was the subject of a special inquiry from Baghdad, supported by the impressions and information from Damascus.

As a result of that, urgent contacts took place between Moscow and Baghdad.

In the light of these contacts, which concluded on the eighth of this month with a personal letter from the Soviet leaders to Mr Saddam Husayn inviting the latter to Moscow to discuss various subjects "of common importance to the two countries," the vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, after consulting with President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and members of the Revolutionary Command Council, took the decision to travel to Moscow on the 11th of this month.

The expression "subjects of common importance to the two countries" means many things and includes a number of issues with Arab and international dimensions.

Precautions were taken to prevent the leak of the news, which came as a total surprise to all observers. The trip occurred at an early hour in the morning, without attention-getting measures.

Saddam Husayn's Trip Was a Surprise

Observers in Baghdad did not know that Mr Saddam Husayn had traveled to Moscow until Moscow broadcast the news of his arrival on the afternoon of that day at the head of a large Iraqi delegation which was welcomed by Mr Alexei Kosygin, prime minister of the Soviet Union and member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, at the head of a group including Mr Vaseili Kuznetsov, first vice chairman

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of the Commissariat of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, and a mass of senior officials and members of Arab diplomatic missions accredited to Moscow. They were informed at the last moment of the visit, for whose sake Soviet protocol made a big effort to give it a distinctive character.

The temperature in Moscow was several degrees below freezing, from the standpoint of the climate the Soviet capital has been experiencing these days, but, on the various levels of discussion, it was high--especially after the first working session between Mr Saddam Husayn and President Leonid Brezhnev.

What imparted special significance to these discussions was the fact that this was the first time the leaders of the Soviet Union had listened to a direct statement by a great Arab leader who had played a major, historic role in directing the course of events in the Arab world through two historic initiatives: that of the joint national action charter and that of the Baghdad summit to confront the consequences which had arisen from the Camp David summit.

Therefore the mediation Mr Saddam Husayn performed in order to dispel the clouds of misunderstanding between Syria and the Soviet Union assumed special, effective significance.

One could state, relying on information from reliable sources, that Mr Saddam Husayn, in his discussions on this subject with the Soviet leaders, Presidents Brezhnev and Kosygin in particular, insisted that he had not come to present an actual fact, namely that the union between Syria and Iraq had become a reality on the political, military and economic planes, that there was no room or place to retreat from it and consequently that the consolidation of the defense forces of either party would immediately, without preparation, be reflected on the other.

The Soviet leaders listened with the utmost attention to Mr Saddam Husayn as he described the stages which unificationist action between Iraq and Syria was going through and his conceptions of future conditions and probabilities in the light of the orientation of the Baghdad summit resolutions.

Mr Saddam Husayn stressed Iraq's concern for the treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the development of mutual relations in various fields of cooperation.

In the light of these basic facts, during the visit, which took 3 days, Mr Saddam Husayn and the Iraqi delegation reviewed various aspects of the problems outstanding in the Middle East, among them the Lebanese problem and the need to prevent any development which might threaten the unity and security of Lebanon and consequently expose the Syrian-Iraqi confrontation front with Israel to any danger from separatist elements in Lebanon or Israeli plans encouraging sectarian divisions in Lebanon.

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In addition, Mr Saddam Husayn put the finishing touches on the work Staff Lt Gen 'Adnan Khayrallah, the Iraqi minister of defense, had done to meet the Iraqi armed forces' need for advanced weapons to consolidate their defense capability, especially in the light of their expanded mission as a result of the joint national action charter with Syria.

Although the joint communique contented itself with alluding indirectly to this aspect, and also to that of the discussion on Eritrea and the African Horn, informed sources understand that other important conclusions resulted from the Iraqi-Syria talks on the defense level.

Among these conclusions was the guarantee that within short periods of time Iraq would obtain defensive missile systems which would meet the requirements of defending Iraqi airspace in addition to an unspecified number of the most advanced MiG aircraft, especially the class known by the name "Bat," which is two and a half times greater than the speed of sound.

One could say that the joint communique, this time, chose a precise formula for preserving a number of the important results the visit realized, especially during the second working session in President Brezhnev's office.

Bilateral Relations Since 1972

In any event, an enlarged review of the joint communique may point to many important conclusions on the political and military levels and can explain the important expressions which appeared in statements Mr Saddam Husayn made at a dinner party the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party held in his honor in participation with the Soviet government. At this dinner, which was attended by Kosygin, heading the Soviet officials, as well as all the members of the Iraqi delegation, Mr Saddam Husayn gave a talk saying "It has become a permanent fact in relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union that we carry on consultation between ourselves on basic issues concerning us jointly, as regards both bilateral relations and conditions in the Arab nation, the Middle East region, and international issues and conditions.

"Experience has confirmed the truth and necessity of this evaluation."

He added, "Our bilateral relations, since the signing of the treaty of co-operation between us in 1972, have been distinguished by the fact that they are based on fixed foundations of principle which stand on true friendship and mutual respect with principles of sovereignty and concern for the common interests of our peoples."

After he expressed his satisfaction with the level bilateral relations between the two countries had attained, he stressed that both the Iraqi and the Soviet parties were anxious, during the discussion of issues related to the just struggle the Arab nation was waging against the

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Zionist enemy, "to understand the circumstances and considerations of the other side in accordance with the principles it believed in and the responsibilities it bore."

Mr Saddam Husayn was thus referring to the fact that differences in the detailed philosophical interpretation of matters related to the principles and bases of a settlement in the Middle East did not prevent cooperation.

Therefore, Mr Saddam Husayn emphasized the fiasco of al-Sadat and the American forces in persuading the Arab world of their platform and the Camp David summit agreements, saying:

"The Arab summit conference held in Baghdad has come as an affirmation to the world that the overwhelming majority of the Arab people reject these agreements and do not agree to the platform by which the Egyptian regime is proceeding.

"The Arab summit conference also affirmed that the Arab nation is able to adopt a united stand and arrive at a sound program which represents a minimum joint Arab position for protecting just Arab rights and demands."

He added, "On this occasion, we esteem the position of the Soviet Union, the friend who has supported the resolutions of the summit conference in Baghdad and has backed the orientation this conference expressed in consolidating joint Arab action against Zionist aggression."

A Digression of Significance

From that he made a digression of significance, emphasizing the achievement which the joint national action charter between Iraq and Syria represents in embodying the national hopes of the masses in both countries, which coincide with Arab national hopes, pointing out that "The Soviet friends have always appealed for solidarity between Iraq and Syria."

The joint communique issued following conclusion of the visit on the evening of 12 December stated, at the outset, that "Detailed, fruitful discussions took place in an atmosphere dominated by friendship and mutual understanding between Comrade Saddam Husayn, deputy secretary of the Regional Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, and Comrade Alexei Kosygin, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet prime minister. The discussions dealt with the situation in the Arab region, the results of the ninth Arab summit conference held in Baghdad, the development of bilateral relations and a number of issues of concern to both sides."

Condemnation of the "Camp" Agreements

Following that, the joint communique contained the following general points:

"In their discussions, Iraq and the Soviet Union expressed special interest in the tense situation in the Arab region.

"They expressed their extreme anxiety over the constant tension in the region resulting from aggressive, expansionist Zionist policy supported by imperialist circles.

"The two sides severely condemned the Camp David agreements concluded between the Zionist entity and the Egyptian leaders, with the active participation of the United States of America.

"The two sides condemned the agreement which is being propounded in Washington on this basis, which constitutes a plot being hatched behind the Arabs' back, conflicts with their interests, fundamentally relies on resistance to the Arabs, aims at the attainment of partial, separate agreements which will enable the Zionist entity to retain the occupied Arab territories and prevent the Palestinian Arab people from obtaining their legitimate rights, and consequently obstructs the establishment of a just, permanent peace."

After the communique had condemned the Egyptian leaders' capitulationist measures, which were aimed at splitting Arab ranks, it went on to refer to the statements Mr Saddam Husayn had made concerning the steps Iraq is continuing to adopt to implant its relations with Syria in the context of the zeal of leaders in both countries to continue along the road to total cooperation in accordance with the joint national action charter. The communique proclaims a Soviet position on this development, since the Soviet party had praised the Iraqi and Syrian leaders' decision to consolidate their efforts to cause the capitulationist schemes to fail and develop unificationist relations between themselves for the sake of strengthening the unity of the Arab countries, counterattacking the Zionist aggression and guaranteeing legitimate Arab national rights.

The Soviet party praised Iraq's initiative and efforts in holding the ninth Arab summit conference in Baghdad; it participated actively in uniting Arab ranks, standing up to the Zionist schemes and their aggressive aims, and thwarting schemes for a capitulationist settlement. The two parties stressed the importance of applying these Baghdad conference resolutions.

The Soviet Union and Iraq also expressed their firm conviction that a just, stable peace in the Arab region can be established only through the liberation of the occupied Arab territories and full attainment of the fixed, legitimate national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including their right to determine their destiny and establish an independent Palestinian state.

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Content of the Communique

As regards meeting requirements for strengthening Iraqi defense capability, the communique contained a paragraph with long-range significance, stating:

"The two parties once again stressed their readiness to continue to cooperate in the sphere of strengthening the defense capability of the Republic of Iraq, in view of the fact that it is an important factor in strengthening the national independence and sovereignty of the state.

"The two parties praised the important gains which have been achieved in the field of mutual economic cooperation, observed that there still are broad possibilities and horizons for this cooperation, and will exert efforts to develop it."

In Moscow, the Iraqi minister of planning and member of the Revolutionary Command Council, Mr 'Adnan Husayn, joined the Iraqi delegation; Mr 'Adnan Husayn had preceded the delegation to Moscow on a visit which had been decided upon earlier to discuss means of expanding economic and technical cooperation between Iraq and the Soviet Union and reviewing the stages of implementation of the projects Soviet organizations are carrying out in Iraq, especially in the context of oil installations.

The delegation which accompanied the vice president to Moscow, then Havana, included Messrs 'Izzat Ibrahim, member of the Revolutionary Command Council and interior minister of Iraq, Tariq 'Aziz, member of the Revolutionary Command Council, Burhan-al-Din 'Abd-al-Rahman and 'Abdallah Fadil, who are both members of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, and Dr Sa'dun Hammadi, minister of foreign affairs, in addition to a number of senior Iraqi government and party officials.

When the official visit ended, there was no indication of Mr Saddam Husayn's move to Cuba. Twenty-four hours before leaving Moscow Mr Saddam Husayn met with Mr Carlos Rodriguez, vice president of the Councils of state and ministers in the Republic of Cuba, who had also been making an official visit to the Soviet Union.

It appears that the principle of accepting the previous Cuban invitation to visit Cuba was decided at this meeting, particularly in view of the importance of completing the discussions which took place with the Soviet leaders regarding a reasonable settlement in Eritrea and the African Horn in the context of the expanded African role Cuba played and the care Cuba had shown not to subject its relations with the countries of the Arab world to embarrassment.

From the Frost of Moscow to the Warmth of Havana

Thus, on the evening of the 13th of this month, while Mr Saddam Husayn and the members of his delegation were receiving a warm farewell, all

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observers thought that he was going back to Baghdad and news agencies actually cabled their correspondents to get ready to cover the return and try to interpret the results of the Moscow talks.

However, Mr Saddam Husayn's airplane left the frost of Moscow for the warmth of Havana without previous announcement. The vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council was thus responding to an official invitation tendered by the Cuban government and the Cuban Communist Party /to him/ in his capacity as assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party and vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council.

At the dawn of the 14th of this month, Mr Saddam Husayn's plane landed at Havana Airport in the midst of a great mass gathering headed by Fidel Castro, president of the Council of State and secretary general of the Cuban Communist Party and Raul Castro, minister of defense, in addition to members of the Political Bureau of the party's Central Committee and members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps.

For Mr Saddam Husayn, the dark-haired Arab leader coming from the cradle of ancient civilization in the Arab east, Havana truly had prepared a reception whose features were distinguished by the warmth of Spanish blood, and Baghdad's words inspired in people's minds many meanings linked with the country which had imparted its character to the fables of the Thousand and One Nights and given its name to brilliant Arab civilization.

This concern to honor the Arab guest was crystallized when the papers came out with headlines bearing expressions in Arabic, alongside the Spanish, welcoming Mr Saddam Husayn and the members of his delegation.

The masses were most eager to express the warmth of the meeting on every occasion Saddam Husayn was invited to meet and encounter.

The Iraqi-Cuban Talks

In spite of the great distance between Moscow and Havana, official talks between the Iraqi party, headed by Mr Saddam Husayn, and the Cuban party, headed by Mr Fidel Castro, started on the afternoon of the 14th of this month.

In an atmosphere described as "extremely friendly," the two parties reviewed Iraqi-Cuban relations of friendship which had made rapid, fruitful development in various spheres. The two delegations then turned to review the situation in the Middle East and the Probabilities accruing from President al-Sadat's continued isolated platform. This discussion was the prelude to a frank talk on the impact of the recent developments in the region of the African Horn, especially Eritrea.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's information has it that the Iraqi delegation insistently stressed, as it had in Moscow, that it was essential to deviate

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from the attempt to solve the problem of the relations between the Eritrean revolution and the Ethiopian regime militarily, for the sake of reaching a reasonable, viable mutual understanding with the detachments of the Eritrean revolution in a manner which would constitute a compromise solution between Ethiopian strategic requirements and the requirements of Eritrean national sovereignty.

Informed circles predict that Mr Saddam Husayn's talks in Moscow and Havana will have positive results which will become rapidly crystallized in Eritrea, since they contain an atmosphere which will help a settlement through negotiations.

In addition, the two delegations also exchanged information regarding the experiences of both the Iraqi and the Cuban revolutions and their achievements in various spheres.

These frank, amicable discussions led to support for understanding between the two countries and consolidation of their joint actions in facing Zionist aggression and actions of the imperialist forces in the Arab world.

Mr Saddam Husayn's Cuban visit offered a new international forum for stating Arab viewpoints in the broad form with which his visit to Moscow was characterized. In addition to the political gains from this visit, there was the economic gain of developing the growing cooperation between Iraq and Cuba. The two countries signed a detailed economic cooperation agreement between themselves. Signing the agreement for Iraq was Mr 'Adnan Husayn, minister of planning and member of the Revolutionary Command Council, and, for Cuba, Mr Carlos Rodriguez, vice president of the councils of state and ministers, who had returned from Moscow at the same time as the Iraqi delegation.

Observers who have been informed of some of the results of Mr Saddam Husayn's trip to Moscow and Havana have described it as a historic trip of solutions, by which they mean that numerous signs show that Saddam Husayn managed to mobilize further international forces for a solution to Arab problems in accordance with the requirements of Arab national interests, going beyond the text of the Middle East to Arab portions of Africa. These signs also point out that he attained something important in the field of support for the defensive capability of the Arab front, which will not accept non-Arab solutions to Arab problems.

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IRAQ

PRESS ATTACHE IN PARIS DESCRIBES PAN-ARAB NATURE OF MEDIA EFFORT

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 14-20 Dec 78 p 6

/Interview with Sami Mahdi, Iraqi Press Attache in Paris, by Ibrahim al-Sayyah: "With the Press Attaches in Paris (3): Sami Mahdi, Embassy of Iraq: 'Our Media Effort Is Nationalist and Arab'"/

/Text As part of the interviews with press and cultural attaches of Arab embassies in France, Mr Sami Mahdi, press attache in the Iraqi embassy and director of the Iraqi cultural Center in Paris, is talking this week to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI about Arab media activity and the center's activity in France.

I asked Mr Sami Mahdi, "Is there a general idea about Arab information in France? What are your recommendations?"

/Answer Arab information in France is still weak and limited for numerous reasons, most important of which is the lack of agreement among Arab media about minimum common media goals and action to achieve these goals.

It should also be observed that these Arab media are concerned with what is regional, if I may use the expression, more than with what is Arab in general. They look for regional media gains more than they seek to perform the general Arab information mission in France, which leads to a fragmentation of efforts on the one hand and the creation of contradictions which are perceived by our French friends, who talk about how to create a common ground on which to move without coming up against the sensitivities of one Arab body or another.

The greatest and most obvious example of this is the Arab-French Solidarity and the difficult circumstances facing it as a result of this sort of fragmentation.

The Arab League Office was to have drawn up and defined common goals and worked to carry them out, but, for one reason or another, the office does not seem able to perform its obligations.

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/Question/ What about Zionist information?

/Answer/ Zionist information has organizations which cooperate with one another, some of which complement the others' work, behind it. Then, the Zionists are organized and have their influence within the media. Facilitating their activities further is the fact that some of them are French and enjoy all the benefits of French citizenship.

The National Goal First of All

/Question/ What is Iraq's mission in the information field?

/Answer/ Despite the fact that our organizations are those of an Arab country, namely Iraq, we do not so much work with an Iraqi spirit as with an Arab spirit. That is, we strive to keep the greatest possible degree of integration and harmony between what is Arab and what is Iraqi in our action. This naturally is an embodiment of the principles of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the commander of the revolution in Iraq.

This applies also to press departments as much as it applies to the activity of the cultural center, whose activity is plainly obvious as it is oriented toward the public.

/Question/ What are the center's spheres of activities?

/Answer/ The center's activity is of a cultural character, since culture has a public and also because we aspire to have French public opinion realize that the Arabs are not just "oilmen" but that they are also a nation with a deep-rooted civilization, a rich heritage and a developing modern culture. Therefore, we are anxious to present the French public first of all with the wherewithal of Arab civilization and present-day Arab culture.

We Want Greater Activity

/Question/ Are you satisfied with the activities of the Iraqi Cultural Center in Paris?

/Answer/ So far we are not satisfied with the level of the center's activities and work, and we believe that the center can perform broader, more effective activity. For this reason we are now intending to reorganize its status, starting with a search for a building in a suitable spot and ending with the organization of seasonal programs absorbing diverse cultural activities open to the broader French public.

/Question/ What did you do last season? What do you intend to do in the near future?

/Answer/ We presented a program covering a period of 6 months. Every month there were two sections. This program was carried out with

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conspicuous success, but we believe, as we had previously pointed out, that we can perform better, more broadly effective activities, and if we get beyond the stage of reorganization in 2 months' time we will have made a substantial stride along the road to achieving the center's aspirations.

The activities the center carries out include lectures, presentation of documentary and historical films, establishment of diverse artistic exhibits, and cultural, literary and poetic soirees. In addition, the center presents Iraq and the Arab nation, distributes newspapers and publications, and answers letters and queries from the French public, which are very numerous.

We also participate in French cultural and even non-cultural activities on some occasions in order to highlight the principles we are talking about. An example of this is our participation in the Rheims Commercial Exhibit and the Book Fair in Nice. We also try to conduct activities in other French cities, and we try to offer our assistance to Arab organizations which ask for films, pictures and documents.

/Question/ What about the Center Library?

/Answer/ We are intending to reorganize the library and set up a lending system as soon as we move the center (in about a month). Part of our task is to follow up on implementation of the technical and cultural cooperation agreement between Iraq and France. Among the programs are bringing artistic groups from Iraq, such as the National Folklore Troupe and the Musical Heritage Troupe, and establishment of Iraqi dress exhibits and folklore exhibits. In our estimation, none of this will achieve the desired aspirations as long as there is no Arab activity complementing ours.

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LEBANON

INTERVIEW WITH ARMY COMMANDER GEN VICTOR KHURI

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English Jan 79 pp 28-30

[Interview with Gen Victor Khuri, date and place not given]

[Text] The Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Victor Khoury, holds one of the most sensitive posts in Lebanon now. He is responsible for rebuilding the Lebanese Army from scratch despite the odds against him, with the military assistance promised President Elias Sarkis by the French Government. In this exclusive interview, General Khoury discusses some of the problems he had to face when he took up office just after the Civil War. He also describes his relationship with the Syrian-dominated Arab Deterrent Force, expresses his determination to build up an army representing all the Lebanese, and voices support for the new Army Bill now before Parliament. "Nothing will deter us from bringing all renegade officers to trial," he adds. General Khoury also expressed his readiness to collect all the arms in the country once he is asked to do that but only after the army has been completely rebuilt. Excerpts from the interview with THE MIDDLE EAST follow.

Q You took over as Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces just after the two-year Civil War. What kind of situation did you inherit from your predecessor, General Hanna Sa'ed?

O Well, perhaps the existence of so many factions and groupings inside the armed forces was the most difficult problem I faced at the time. There was the Lebanese Arab Army in control of one part of the country and it enjoyed the support of some parties and organisations. There was the so-called Lebanese Army, backed by parties from the other side.

The divergence of views and even hatred between the different factions inside the army was a reality which cannot be denied. I even had to bring in my personal guards with me; I could not trust anyone I did not know - the split of loyalties was strong at the time.

Then of course there were the pressures which had been exerted prior to my appointment. These even culminated in the abortive attempt on the life of the Foreign Minister, Fuad Butros, when 16 kilos of TNT was placed in his house; this was done just the night before the Council of Ministers was due to meet to decide on my appointment.

It was under such conditions that I took up the task of rebuilding the armed forces. I first had to appoint a Chief of Staff. Because he belonged to a particular sect, I even had to take over the responsibility of appointing trusted guards to drive him to the Defence Ministry. We then appointed officers and heads to the various branches of the armed forces. This was followed by the rebuilding of the various directorates from people representing all the various sects and creeds.

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The door was opened for voluntary enlistment. A new breed of 1,700 to 2,000 soldiers joined from all parts of Lebanon and they formed the nucleus of a brigade directly affiliated to the Army Command. The Military School was also opened and nearly 200 student officers registered. They are now at the end of their first year. We also continued training sessions abroad. So basically one can say that the psychological factors which I had to deal with in terms of the men and their morale and the divisiveness of the armed forces were the most difficult problems facing me at the time.

□ What made you accept such a sensitive and unrewarding task at such difficult times?

○ Well, it was based on my conviction that "there is no homeland without independence and no independence without the army". I was also convinced that a homeland cannot be built without sacrifices. Naturally, I greatly appreciated the confidence that President Sarkis and his Government had placed in me and I appreciated the fact that the regime was doing its share of the sacrifice despite the moral and physical pressures it had been subjected to.

□ You have now been in office nearly a year and a half. How much have you been able to achieve in the rebuilding of the new Lebanese Army and what are some of the obstacles that have stood in your way?

○ From the first day I assumed office, I realized that any army must be rebuilt and not patched up. That's why I concentrated on first facilitating the work of the staff, appointing its chief and then moving on to appointing heads of the other departments and directorates. I even had to build our own crack force to protect the Defence Ministry so that all those who choose to help us in the rebuilding process can come and go freely without any threat or danger. We established the Ilfa Camp, which grouped soldiers from all parts of Lebanon. We also formed our Special Security Squad (Mokafaha) which enables the Army Command to adopt decisions without fear of any pressure or threat. Freedom of choice must be protected by force.

Basically, all I have done so far is to pave the way for a rebuilding process that will cover all the Lebanese territory. I have appointed commanders for each region and

new units have been set up. This will enable the armed forces to absorb more arms and raise the combat capabilities of its members to face the immensity of the threat facing us. Part of this task has been accomplished successfully.

□ President Sarkis has emphasized on numerous occasions that the Syrian forces in Lebanon are here at the request of and under the complete authority of the Lebanese regime. The Syrians have also mentioned this many times. How would you best describe your relationship with the Syrians and how do you foresee the future in that respect, taking into consideration the views and stands of the various parties involved in the Lebanese conflict?

○ Experience has taught us that there can be no government without an army; the same experience has shown us that there can be no government with two armies. The Lebanese Army which is now being built up and the Arab Deterrent Force are both supposed to be responsible for one task: maintaining security. They are both supposed to obey the orders of one authority: the Lebanese constitutional authority, despite the fact some incidents sometimes indicate otherwise. In most cases such incidents are just passing and have no significance. As Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, my relationship with the Arab Deterrent Force is one of mutual respect; our contacts are made through Lebanese army officers affiliated to the Army Command who have been temporarily seconded to the Deterrent Force.

Despite what is being heard and said about the divergence in viewpoints among the Lebanese vis-à-vis the Deterrent Force, the Lebanese know very well that the burden carried by these forces on our behalf is only temporary. When our own forces have been completely rebuilt - and we are serious in that and have gone a long way in that direction - we will assume that responsibility alone. The friendly Arab forces, headed by the Syrians, will then leave and we will be eternally grateful for their work.

□ One sector of the Lebanese population has been charging that the Lebanese Army Command is not truly representative of all the Lebanese and that the situation has not changed despite the two-year Civil War. What is

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your response to such charges?

○ No one can deny that during the time of the French mandate there was a differentiation in the acceptance of applicants to the Military Academy based on their sect; even the applicants themselves used to come from one sect only. After the mandate, however, when the army was Lebanised, more of a balance was achieved. Lebanon went through a lot of upheavals quite different from the present ones during which the army was an example of national unity. This could only be attributed to the balance which existed among the different sects which they now claim is lacking.

Then came the events of the last three years when the country became the victim of practically every plot; it was natural that the army should suffer in the same way the country had suffered. I would like to remind you that when I took over as a commander of the armed forces, all the officers were from one sect, with the exception of one. Since then I have been working hard to redress the balance and to unite the men.

I would very much like to say here that what has been achieved so far is not all that I want to achieve. I will continue to work in that direction until justice has been attained.

□ The new Lebanese Army Bill has now been before Parliament for some time without ratification. This has caused a split inside the country's legislative and executive powers. Do you think the bill should go through Parliament as it is and would you think of making any amendments to it. If so, what kind of changes?

○ I am convinced of the need to make amendments in the Army Bill. I welcomed the idea of the establishment of the Higher Defence Council which will be responsible for drawing out the country's defence policy. I was one of those who proposed it in the first place, because the proposed amendments will facilitate the work for the commander and his subordinates.

I was also one of those who proposed the appointment of four deputies to the Chief of Staff because what applied in 1948 does not hold in 1978.

But what I am apprehensive of when it comes to limiting the authority of the Army Command by the politicians is that the army can become more or less neutralised thus losing its combat ability. One must

remember that the aim behind the proposed changes cannot be simply regarded as a gain for one party and a loss for another; one should solely regard those changes as a gain for the army. The current discussions on the Army Bill are a reflection of interest in the army and its fateful role.

As for the proposed amendments, Parliament is master of itself and whatever it agrees on we will implement. We give our views when consulted on military matters, but politics and legislation should be handled by the competent authorities.

□ Developments of the last month show that the army is now also under attack even by rightwing militias. Even your home in Amsheet has been attacked. This is a marked change from the situation in the past when the army used to come under attack from leftist forces. To what do you attribute such a change and would it affect your position on the personal level and at the Army Command level?

○ The information and military campaign and attacks that are being waged against the army are well founded as a matter of principle. This is due to the fact that the security plan created a presence for the army in areas where the militias are in control; so there is a natural divergence in objectives on military matters. It is equally true that the army is absent from other areas for personal and political reasons.

But all these campaigns being waged against the army spring from one main cause: the struggle for power. I must stress here that many parties to the conflict will suffer when the army is rebuilt because it will deprive these parties of a lot of the power they enjoyed in various areas during the events. So these parties feel they must prevent the rebuilding of the army. But I feel that no matter what we do, attempts to undermine the work of the army will continue; the reasons behind it are known to everyone.

As far as I am concerned, I do not suffer from any complexes towards anyone, not even the Arab Army. The best example of that is that many of its officers and soldiers have rejoined us in the army and they have all refrained from getting involved in situations which break the army codes.

All these campaigns being waged against us will only make us more determined to continue the march. The carrying of arms belongs only to the professional soldier; so

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does the protection of the country's independence and guaranteeing the safety and security of the citizen. My sole objective is to build a non-partisan and strong army no matter how other people's stands change.

□ Under the recent decisions taken by the Army Command it was decided to bring to justice all the renegade officers who have led their own factions of the army during and after the civil war. These have included such officers as Ahmad Khatib, Saad Haddad, Sami Chidiak and others. What brought about the decision and are you determined to bring them to face military trial no matter what the obstacles might prove to be?

○ In military terms, the answer to such a question is common knowledge. Every decision taken must be followed by implementation. And it was on that basis that I took the decisions. The timing for carrying out these decisions is not important.

But I would like to point out here - and not as a criticism - that the responsibility for these decisions should have been taken by my predecessor. The mistakes for which they have been referred to the military courts were committed during the period preceding my present term of office. As far as I am concerned, I did not hesitate to take quick and decisive action when similar breaches happened during my term of office. Thus when we were faced with a case similar to that of the Lebanese Arab Army in the person of Muhammad Salim, I took immediate action. The same applied to the Lebanese Revolutionary Army, which was led by Captain Ashkar. I simply nipped the movement in the bud. I will not hesitate to take similar action in the future in order to facilitate and quicken the rebuilding of the army.

As to whether the army is capable of implementing these decisions, that is taken for granted. An army is always capable of carrying out tasks much bigger than it. The decisions will be implemented at the right time. One must not forget that our objective is to consolidate security and to rebuild the country. We are builders not judges.

□ A lot of hope had been pinned on the new Lebanese Army when you sent units to South Lebanon. But then the force was stopped at Kawkaba. Why didn't you push ahead to establish your presence in the South no matter what the price, and are you still determined to deploy army units in the South in the near future?

○ It is true that the decision to send an army force to the South instilled a lot of hope among the Lebanese. I plan to keep that hope alive. The halting of the force in Kawkaba does not mean that the decision to enter the South has been revoked. The determination is still there but, as you know, carrying out such a decision is not purely military. The stoppage was due to the changes that took place in the stands of the conflicting parties involved in the South. What I can stress here is that the stoppage was purely tactical and temporary. Entry into the South remains our immediate objective in collaboration with the United Nations forces. When the conditions are suitable we will enter, no matter what the sacrifices.

□ At all the conferences held to try to solve the Lebanese crisis - national, Arab, or international - it has been emphasised that no solution to the crisis can be reached unless an effective role is given to "the new and reconstructed" Lebanese Army. How do you visualise such a role, taking into consideration the experience of the last few months when you deployed the army in such places as Hadath, the Port area, and in the eastern sector of the capital before that?

○ The army remains an executive organ in the hands of the country's political authority no matter what decisions are adopted at any conference. Because of the complexity of the Lebanese crisis and because the security threat involves every region in the country, I see no way out unless the army is able to make its presence felt in all these regions. This is what we are working on now.

□ It is generally accepted that the Lebanese conflict will not be solved until a day comes when all the arms in the country are collected. If such a task is given to you, how will you go about it and do you think you can succeed?

○ When the army is completely rebuilt and is able to protect every citizen and his property, then I will work on collecting all the arms in the hands of the Lebanese if I am asked to do that. If that happens, there will be no need for anyone to carry arms, which they now possess because they claim they want to protect themselves. I am sure that many people will get rid of their arms voluntarily when the authorities are in a position to take strong measures against those who do not obey the law, especially on the question of possessing and carrying arms. □

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LEBANON

INTERVIEW WITH LEBANON UN REPRESENTATIVE GHASSAN TUWAYNI

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English Jan 79 pp 31-34

[Interview With Lebanon UN Representative Ghassan Tuwayni, by Judith Kipper, date and place not given]

[Text]

Ghassan Tueni, Lebanon's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, reflects on his action-packed year there -- a year of conflict and tragedy for a country that was once considered the bastion of liberalism in the Middle East.

Philosophically, Ambassador Tueni believes that "history in the region is an encounter between the human and the divine". His human talents were tested within months of his arrival at the UN when he found himself pleading Lebanon's case before the Security Council during the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon. His personal command of the situation is credited with the US-sponsored resolution to reaffirm and protect Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence.

No newcomer to politics, Tueni has been a minister several times and was a member of Parliament and Deputy Speaker of the House in Lebanon. He served as Special Representative of the President of Lebanon to Washington in 1976 and of the Arab League to the US in 1977.

Before embarking on his current diplomatic mission, Tueni was well known as the publisher and editor of the hard-hitting Beirut daily *An-Nahar*, considered the most authoritative newspaper in the Arab world. *An-Nahar* was published continuously throughout the Lebanese civil war which Tueni claims was a result of its defence of Lebanese unity.

Ghassan Tueni does not avoid hard questions. Here he discusses some of the most difficult with *Judith Kipper*.

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Kipper: Recently President Carter asked Soviet leader Brezhnev to join the US in supporting a ceasefire resolution. This superpower initiative with strong warnings to parties on all sides of the Lebanese conflict seems to be working. What continuing role do you see for the superpowers in Lebanon?

Tueni: In the Security Council you have to have an agreement of the veto powers, so there had to be superpower intervention. If what was happening in Lebanon had been allowed to continue, the superpowers would have had to intervene through a transitional stage, where many minipowers or client states would also have had to intervene.

No issue of minor importance in appearance, at least, would have been brought to the Security Council, made the object of a superpower dialogue, if there were not a concern about possible consequences for world peace and security. Lebanon is the only place where there is a crisis which is unmanageable as part of the whole Middle East war. It is a projection inside Lebanese structures of international confrontation. It has been standard Lebanese doctrine which has always been maintained that this war is not a Lebanese war. It is a multidimensional conflict, Arab vs. Arab, Arab vs. Israeli, Arab vs. Lebanese.

□ This kind of initiative has great political significance. Does it set a precedent for other Middle East hotspots?

○ I hope it does. It shows that both superpowers are concerned with the preservation of Lebanon in different ways. It also shows that there can be contact between the superpowers to extinguish fires that could have larger consequences.

□ In what way do the superpowers see Lebanon?

○ The US has had a constant interest in preserving the integrity of Lebanon. One wonders today if the Soviets are not keener to maintain those same liberties in Lebanon because it has become the only place where Soviet policy can be defended vis-à-vis an Arab world which is becoming more and more pro-American, despite appearances.

□ You have said that Lebanon is not negotiable, nor is it a dispensable entity. Considering these new

circumstances in which the US and the USSR have made a certain commitment to saving Lebanon, what is the national political solution?

○ There can only be one national solution, one which will bring all the Lebanese together. It is stupid to think that after the apocalyptic events which Lebanon has gone through that we can go back to what was. There is no moral, economic, political or physical precedent in history. Out of the war, new forces have been born that will transform the face of Lebanon, not revolutionary forces. Lebanese democracy had its foundation in a certain form of social democracy, the existence of a middle class of craftsmen, traders, professionals, etc. This is the class most hit by the war - it has virtually disappeared.

We do not yet know how to assess the consequences of the disappearance of this class. In terms of changing the political system, what is important is the emergence of new classes. If we push this analysis a little further, in terms of the political Christian community, those who have gone to war, the time will come when questions will be asked which have no answers. We know they cannot be answered in terms of victory.

□ Can you begin to identify these new classes?

○ I can only guess. There will be a greater radical trend among young Christians. The poorer classes among young Christians have fought, contrary to what is often said, and they have suffered tremendously. They will be the new left in Lebanon.

Another political force is the army. We must have a strong army if we are to absorb and contain the various private armies. The army can be an instrument of government and an instrument of social integration. I do not think we are at the threshold of a military era, but the military arm of the government will have to play an important role in terms of social integration.

□ Does economic reconstruction have to wait for a peace settlement?

○ It is imperative with a vision of the Lebanon of tomorrow to define the social objectives of reconstruction. You cannot redo what was undone. New political realities emerge, demographic changes have occurred, whole areas have been destroyed, old slums torn down and new ones built.

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There is an air of Calcutta in the once-fashionable district of Hamra in Beirut. There is an exodus to the mountain, the land, the villeges. We must plan comprehensively the reconstruction of the whole country, at least identify objectives not only in economic, but social terms. And, we will have to be conscious of the political implications of the social options.

□ The survival of Lebanon will depend, at least partially, on building a strong army. With the deep religious divisions which exist today is there any real hope of this?

○ I think so. Precisely, because the army tends to stereotype and wipe away differences. It is probably the one melting pot where some form of national unity can be achieved. The old concept of the army being mainly Christian will have to be dealt with at the political level. It is unrealistic not to recognise that Lebanon was always governed as some sort of federation between religious communities. We have to re-invent a pluralistic system which takes into account the religious realities, but have to be less pluralistic than before.

□ The protection of the minorities has become a critical issue. With political self-determination as the primary goal of former colonies, doesn't this imply an almost insoluble dichotomy?

○ Protecting minorities; there is no recipe for it. What is necessary is social integration of diversified communities that have never learned to live together, but only side by side.

□ The social and economic changes in the Arab world since 1973 have had a dramatic impact. So has President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, which fundamentally changed the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These changes have caused serious political dislocations. Is there still a basis for Arab unity, for convergence or merely for co-operation?

○ Arab unity always appeared to be nearer until the time came to translate it into reality. The Arabs then discovered how remote it was. Wealth has been counterproductive. The less privileged have always been the greatest supporters of Arab unity. I am sure President Sadat, who appears to be rejecting Arab unity, is not expressing his innermost feeling. I think Egypt

is conscious of the fact that its destiny is to be part of the Arab world. It is probably the country that has the greatest vested interest in unity. This is also true in the Gulf. The wealthy emirates don't want unity; the poorer ones crave unity.

Arab unity will not be created democratically or instantly, but achieved by steps and the positive use of force; or by the force factor of outside dangers which compel countries to get together. There is a need for closer economic relations similar to what has been achieved in the European Common Market. But like Europe it will not create a common nationality. What we will see is developing identities, greater egotism in certain communities, but in a manner not incompatible with closer economic co-operation, perhaps in foreign policy and military matters as well.

□ What effect will peace with Israel have on the process of economic integration?

○ Israel has played an integrating role in the Arab world. The Baghdad summit has to be taken as a reality. It is not expediency and it may not create unity, but it has its effects. Baghdad met under the pressures of the Egyptian-Israeli peace and events in Iran which have shaken all taken-for-granted realities among the Arabs.

Peace is a challenge for Israel not for the Arabs. The Arabs somehow have accepted Israel as a fact which is there, but one which they do not have to deal with; a reality that has isolated itself and remained a foreign implantation. If there is to be peace and a normalisation of relations, Israel will have to create its own rules of Arab acceptability. How will Israel behave vis-à-vis the Arabs? Will it go on being the fearful enemy always developing the danger complex? Will it approach the Arabs like the white man in Rhodesia with technological superiority? Will it want a privileged position? If so, there will never be acceptability, nor peace. Israel cannot hold back the cultural, political and economic development of the 120 million Arabs.

□ By the time normalisation becomes a reality, won't the Arabs be a match for Israel?

○ Many of them already are. The Israelis have to accept equality with the Arabs. The relationship of superior/inferior can only entrench enmity, hatred and mistrust and produce later a will to destroy. On the con-

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trary, an admission of equality, Israel becoming just another Middle Eastern state, the 'levantisation of Israel', is the only path to normality, even to partnership. This is going to need a tremendous change within Israeli society. Begin does not show any signs of this, unfortunately.

□ Saudi Arabia has tried to protect its interests in the region and its security by playing a moderating political role and as the banker. Do you think they have had much influence in encouraging the forces for moderate political reform in the Arab world?

○ There is an imbalance in the Saudi role due to the fact that their importance in human terms is not commensurate with their importance in financial terms. The future of Saudi Arabia can only be in a unification of the Arabian Peninsula to provide the population base for the power and financial weight they command. If unity is not achieved, the Arabian Peninsula is headed for tremors. Social and economic development will also push the need for unification with countries like Yemen where poverty is creating a revolutionary threat. The smaller wealthy states are likely to become more satellitised by Saudi Arabia.

□ Could the threat of instability in Iran forge the new alliance you speak of with the support of the US in a sort of NATO of the Gulf states?

○ This alliance was there before Iran. The situation was developing and the events in Iran were not a total surprise to anyone. The Shah described it as the 'Japan of the Middle East'. A certain attitude of the Iranians negatively produced closer relations among the Arabs bordering Iran, pushing those Arabs to find their own strategic concepts independent of Iran. It was a mistake to think that Iran could be the stabilising factor in the Gulf. It has its major importance, but there has never been a real axis between Riyadh and Tehran. There was a policy of fear and solicitude, friendship and secret enmity; alliance in short-term interests, but rivalry in long-term goals.

Also, the cultural differences between the Persians and the Arabs are very important though they may not be visible in the West. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will have to look at both North and South Yemen and the mountains of Oman, where Iran played a role which will now have to be assumed by the Arabs. This role cannot be played the same way as Iran played it, protective and

military. What happened in Iran is proof that the military and authoritarian solution is not the right approach. Political and economic solutions will have to be developed.

□ Won't these nations which are vulnerable need greater US support if military authority is not the right approach?

○ Yes, but what kind of support? The reality is that we have to admit that Saudi Arabia is now more important to the US national security than the US is to Saudi Arabian national security. Interdependence is a two-way street. I don't believe oil can be defended by pumping planes and sophisticated military hardware into oil-rich states. Stockpiling hardware might even be dangerous and counterproductive.

□ The US and Saudi Arabia have a 'special relationship' and it is difficult to see that either would pursue a policy detrimental to that relationship. Yet, from time to time the Saudis have to bend towards the Arab consensus, as Prince Fahd did in Baghdad when he supported the Arabs against Egypt, which was clearly not in the American interest. Is this a weakness in US Middle East policy which has shifted toward the Arabs in recent years?

○ No, this is a sudden revelation to American opinion of the basic paradox of American policy. The US was favouring Israel to a point that was not commensurate with American interests. Another example of this erroneous equation is the bill presented to the US by Israel after Camp David to be paid as the price of peace. This is a basic reality the Arabs have always claimed that Israel was really a subsidised, artificial state.

Now, can Israel survive in peace without these subsidies? And, can the US go on depending on the Arabs while subsidising - the Arabs would say - the enemy state which is implanted there? A totally new relationship will have to be invented in this triangular relationship of the US, the Arabs and Israel.

□ How can the US cope with the rapid changes in Arab society which profoundly influence US relations with the Arabs?

○ It is no more or less complex than the coming together of the Crusaders (the Europeans) and the Arabs in the Middle Ages when the Arabs were the developed

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and the Crusaders were the underdeveloped. Economic factors will play a tremendous role. We will never create a Western-type society in the Arab world. The transfer of technology is a multidimensional problem which cannot be handled artificially. Arab society will be a society that belongs to this century, one that will be able to invent F15s and Cadillacs. Importing technology will give way to a new era of invention and creativity. It is a natural byproduct of development.

What is the basis of this American resistance to the Arabs?

○ There is a kind of American provincialism which is not really in harmony with America's international role. There is still the resistance of the image of the Arab as the villain, the man who can endanger prosperity and peace.

Have you seen any changes? Is this American resistance being subdued somewhat?

○ You do see some changes. For instance, there are more and more publications and articles about the better aspects of Arab life. There is a great curiosity which has produced many books, films and television programmes on Arab culture. If there is interdependence, somehow economic realities do become political realities. Ultimately it is in the Arabs' interest to be understood in the United States.

You recently referred to a new equation which emerged after the 1973 war by saying: "The world had been governed by the balance of power, but since 1973 it is governed by the balance of wealth. The paradox of this situation is that for the first time the war of small nations perturbed the life of big nations." Do you still hold this view? What is the way out of this dilemma for both the small and the big nations?

○ Yes, so much so that when there is no wealth, but only an access or an investment of wealth, it is still true. Lebanon is an example. I continue to believe that the balance of wealth has altered all the old concepts of the balance of power. In the past developed nations were the rich nations and the developing the poor. Now it is the reverse. The underdeveloped were totally dependent on the industrialised, but today the industrialised are dependent on the developing nations not only for markets, but for natural and financial resources as well.

Is this true throughout the Third World or only among the oil-rich

nations?

○ The notion of the Third World is totally out of date. Third to what? We probably now have the Fourth and even the Fifth world. There has not been sufficient knowledge about how to utilise the resources of the wealthy underdeveloped. We should have discovered a link which could have been the United Nations. The wealthy giving their money to an independent international body with access to technology could have become an instrument of development. The wealthy underdeveloped have not found the way to prompt development because of a lack of preparedness.

Can the United Nations really be the structural link? An Arab ambassador has called it a "toothless" organisation. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the UN? Does it depend on superpower interest to enhance its possibilities?

○ The United Nations is what you make it. There is a certain sector of activities where greater co-operation among the superpowers would make it so much more productive. I would not say it is "toothless", but in some areas it is paralysed in political decisions. It hasn't been so in South Africa. The UN has been incapable of acting on Cyprus. In Lebanon it has been useful. It has created this unique and unusual situation whereby the PLO has become a full partner in peacekeeping. Where the UN can be more useful is in peacekeeping if it is allowed to act on behalf of the international community without being crippled by superpower rivalries.

In certain areas neutrality should be accepted by the superpowers so that the development of countries will be protected by the UN from these rivalries that produce crises detrimental to both.

The Soviet Union has been active in Africa, in Yemen and in Afghanistan with some degree of success. What is the key, in your view, to Soviet subversive influence in the Middle East?

○ I would not call it Soviet subversiveness, but Soviet influence. The Soviets are more aggressive than the Americans. They invest more in popular movements; they have an ideological content which the democracies have not been able to create in spite of President Carter's human-rights approach which appeared at one time to be a certain ideological approach. It has not been consistently observed.

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I think democracy as a system is bound to remain behind the dynamic, aggressive, proletarian revolutionary approach. You could call a revolutionary approach subversive if you are on one side of the fence, but those who are on the receiving side call it a revolutionary partnership. Where do I personally stand? I do not stand on the side of Marxism, but I accept it as sometimes a positive factor. □

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MAURITANIA

INTERIOR MINISTER EVALUATES NEW REGIME'S POSITIVE, NEGATIVE POINTS

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 4-10 Jan 79 p 23

[Interview with Mauritanian Interior Minister Jiddou Ould Saleck, by Nabil Maghribi]

[Text] Everything about him reveals seriousness and discipline. He is surrounded by a special air of dignity, but his friendliness encourages whoever is with him to be completely at ease. He is Mauritanian Interior Minister Jiddou Ould Saleck, who played a vital part in planning and carrying out the 10 July reform movement, and who has organizational abilities the effects of which are now becoming evident in Mauritania.

This interview took place in his office in the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott. I had intended that the interview start off with a provocative question, not in order to find out if he could reply objectively, but because he had told me that he would speak with complete frankness once he decided to speak.

I asked Interior Minister Jiddou Ould Saleck, "In light of your basic participation in the 10 July reform movement and your experience in the practice of authority, could you give AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's readers an evaluation of the results, including "self-criticism" if need be?"

He replied calmly, as if he had been expecting such a question, "Let us start off with the positive factors. The reform movement has succeeded in directing the people's forces along a course leading to the achievement of definite goals. The new government has also worked to cleanse these forces of the previous regime's filth, which was hindering progress and was in fact standing as a barrier to development.

"On the economic level, the country was on the brink of bankruptcy when we took over the government. The new leadership has successfully formulated new economic guidelines which have made it possible to make a start on realizing major development projects.

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"On the administrative level, we have worked to revitalize the administration in order to bring it in closer contact with the citizens' daily problems.

"On the foreign level, the new government has successfully adopted a dynamic thrust towards peace, which has enabled it to take important steps in the search for a comprehensive solution to the western desert problem.

"Not to mention the fact that the 10 July movement prescribed the state's domestic and international presence, making the issue of preserving sovereignty an introduction to the establishment of parallel relations with other states--relations serving common interests on an equal footing.

"This balanced role will help expedite the desired solution to the desert problem, for it seriously and effectively serves regional stability.

"In light of these new developments, the new leadership has been able to redouble its efforts in searching for solutions to the economic, social and political problems which we inherited from the previous regime.

"Now we come to self-criticism, as you proposed. I have no objection to speaking about the negative aspects which have accompanied the reform movement. Indisputably, every regime in its early stages has to face difficulties which might hinder its efforts to cleanse itself of some of the filth with the necessary speed.

"I believe that the administration (its organization and injection with new, efficient personnel) still needs comprehensive, radical reform, to eliminate any attempts at opportunism and profiteering and to infuse the administrative agencies with new blood and sincere dynamism, which will bring it in greater contact with the problems being brought up.

"This phenomenon is due to a lack of personnel, or proficient elements capable of replacing the ossified elements who did not play the role required of them.

"The new regime must be aware of the danger of this problem, and must give it the study and concern it deserves. This can be done by conducting radical administrative reform in order to put the right man in the right place. There are employees who have been treated unjustly and who have not been entrusted with the responsibilities they deserve. Therefore, appointments must be made according to objective standards."

The Interior Ministry's Numerous Activities

Question: With respect to the Interior Ministry, what have you accomplished to date?

Answer: We have completed the administrative reform of the ministry's agencies, not just to make them responsible for social and political stability but to make this lead to participation in achieving national growth. A political department has also been established, concerned with the cultural

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and political activities of organizations and societies. We have decided to establish a section to look after foreigners and regulate their entry into and exit from the country.

We Will Accept No Solution For Which We Have To Pay a Price

Question: Do you personally have any specific ideas about the desert problem?

Answer: Our position, as stated by the Military Committee for National Recovery, is plain and united on this matter. We are now waiting for the "Committee of Judges" to finish its work. To date, we have not approved any specific, final solution. One thing that is certain is as follows: Mauritania cannot accept any solution for which it has to pay a price. It is also opposed to any military solution, and calls for a just solution which will preserve the rights of the parties concerned.

Two Years Before Democracy is Restored

Question: When you took power you promised that democratic organizations would be established in the country and that free elections would be called. When will that happen?

Answer: At this stage, the frameworks of the state are being rebuilt on sound economic bases. This fundamental step must be taken before any political steps towards establishing democratic organizations is taken.

Question: How much time do you think is needed to establish these democratic political organizations?

Answer: It will be at least 2 years before general elections are called. This time period is needed to anchor the pillars of the state and reconstruct it, as I have mentioned, according to new bases.

Question: It is said that there is some clash of opinions about certain topics within the Military Committee for National Recovery.

Answer: Some western newspapers are trying to damage the committee's unity and cohesiveness by spreading such statements. I can assure you that the committee members are in complete agreement on every major topic that has been brought up. If some arguments have taken place in the committee about a certain topic, this is a healthy phenomenon indicative of democratic dialog, which we approve of in discussing proposed issues.

Nasir, Saddam Husayn, and al-Shadhili

Question: Jiddou Ould Saleck is a prominent personality in Mauritania. You have played a distinguished role in organizing the downfall of Ould Dada. Who are you?

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Answer: I was born in 1945. I believe in liberalism and reject Marxism, although I respect its defenders, for every man should have his political choice. I am basically a military man. I believe in radical solutions, and I reject half-way solutions.

The political figures I admire are the late President 'Abd-al-Nasir and Saddam Husayn, vice president of the Iraqi Revolution Command Council, and the military leader I admire is Lt Gen Sa'd-al-Din al-Shadhili. Is this enough to give you an idea?

The Fate of Mukhtar Ould Dada

Question: In your capacity as interior minister, are you looking into the circumstances of Former President Mukhtar Ould Dada, who is in detention?

Answer: I visited him once in my capacity as interior minister. He is not in prison, but is under house arrest. I informed him that it had been decided that he would ultimately retire from political life and live as an ordinary citizen.

Question: Will you release him?

The young minister smiled before answering, "If no sentence is passed against him!"

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SAUDI ARABIA

IMPLEMENTATION OF MUNITIONS CITY PROJECT IN DOUBT

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English Jan 79 pp 120, 122

[Text] The recent disturbances and strikes in Iran pose a security threat to the Gulf region, and particularly to Saudi Arabia, which becomes the focus of attention in the event of any slowdown or stoppage in the output of Iranian crude oil.

Regardless of any decision to allow Saudi crude to flow freely that may be taken by the Saudi Cabinet and Crown Prince Fahd, acting Prime Minister during King Khaled's convalescence in Switzerland, the fact remains that Saudi Arabia cannot expand its crude oil exports much beyond 10mn barrels a day. The limits imposed by production capacity mean that it cannot cover the loss sustained by stoppage of production in Iran.

Moreover, the events in Iran come at a critical time for Saudi defence planning. The government has already committed itself to a policy of building so-called military cities in strategic locations throughout the Kingdom, but it could be the turmoil in Iran that will decide the pace at which these cities are built. They include the King Khaled centre in Hafar al-Batin, south of the Iraqi border, Tabuk, near Jordan, and Khamis-Mushayt, near the North Yemen border.

Each serves as a troop-training and housing centre as well as a military garrison equipped with air-strike

capabilities. In addition a munitions city is planned for the Al-Kharj region, south-east of Riyadh, and, although this project has been hanging fire, it now seems possible that there is fresh impetus for it to go ahead.

The munitions city was originally conceived as a \$10bn project under the code name Asad (lion). It was to provide a centre for producing tactical missiles and other military equipment at a location near Riyadh.

The planned population of some 90,000 to 100,000 would make it considerably bigger than the proposed 70,000-strong King Khaled Military City and five times the size of either Tabuk or Khamis-Mushayt. Otherwise there is little information about future developments in Al-Kharj.

What is known is that the Saudi Government has awarded a preliminary design contract for the entire project to the New York architectural and engineering firm Edward Durrell Stone and Associates. According to informed sources, final bids were to be submitted after April 1978 and the contract was to be awarded in September.

It was thought likely last spring that the construction job would go to an international consortium led by Sam P. Wallace Company of Dallas, Texas, which is 38% owned by Ghaith Pharaon, the Jeddah-

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based Saudi entrepreneur.

The Saudi Ministry of Defence and Aviation has taken the project under its wing and shortly after awarding the design work it decided to reassess the project in the light of the Government's policy of cutting expenditure. The consensus of outside observers, before the recent turmoil in Iran, was that the Saudi Government had shelved the project for lack of funds and that it was a low-priority item which might never see the light of day.

Al-Kharj itself has a population of under 14,000 and is situated 86km south-east of Riyadh in a fertile agricultural valley. The joint-venture Italian road construction company Mariglia-Schula is doubling the present two-lane hard-top road which connects Al-Kharj to Riyadh.

On the southern outskirts of the town of Al-Kharj is a small munitions factory built by the National Development Company (NADCO), owned by Hussein Alharty, for SR37.5mn (about \$11.13mn) and carefully guarded by Saudi military personnel. There are also military warehouses adjacent to the munitions factory which were erected by NADCO and are valued at SR10m.

The administrative and other support facilities for the factory, including an administrative building, a military hospital, a stadium and housing for military and medical personnel, have been erected or are under construction by the Saudi contractor Walid Kattan (SOLICO), the West German firm Philipp Holzmann and the Lebanese contractors SOGECO under the overall supervision of VBB, the Swedish consulting engineers and architects.

VBB is also engaged in construction of residential accommodation in other areas for the Saudi Ministry of Defence. Another West German contractor, Karl Brandt, is responsible for expanding the present munitions factory.

Aggregate for these buildings and facilities is being supplied from two sources. Wadi stone (gravel) is delivered to Holzmann's work site and crushed stone is provided from a crusher operated by the Berlin firm Gustav Pegel and Sohn, which has a precast-concrete factory and readymix-concrete plant in Riyadh. Under a management agreement with

the Defence Ministry this company manages a ripping and crushing operation approximately 15km south of Al-Kharj.

But according to sources at the Gustav Pegel and Sohn's quarry they are supplying 600cu.m of stone a day, which is only half of the Blau Knox crusher's capacity. They know of no build-up of construction materials by the Defence Ministry earmarked for the Asad project. On the other hand, there is plenty of mineral deposit there to build the munitions city should the government determine to do so.

For the present, then, there is still no evidence of the Asad project. If the Government intends to proceed with it, it is a very well guarded secret. Al-Kharj is a seemingly prosperous agricultural community. The apparent quiet reminds one of Jubail, where the economic take-off expected on the heels of the Jubail industrial complex has yet to take place.

In Al-Kharj itself goats and feed crops, rather than strategic missiles, dominate the conversation and plans of the townspeople.

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TUNISIA

FUTURE OF BOURGUIBISM THREATENED BY OPPOSITION FORCES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Dec 78-3 Jan 79 pp 21-23

[Article: "Tunisia: Will Bourguibism Last When Bourguiba Is Gone?"]

[Text] There has been a noticeable improvement in the health of the "Great Fighter," President Habib Bourguiba, who is more than 80 years old and who is undergoing treatment at the University Clinic in Bonn by a group of German doctors, one of whom discovered the causes of the joint inflammation which for a long time prevented him from sleeping and getting around.

Whether President Bourguiba is sick or well, whether he is present or not, the big question which has begun to present itself with increasing urgency at all levels of Tunisian political life is: What comes after Bourguiba? Will Bourguibism continue without him, unlike Stalinism without Stalin or Maoism without Mao Zedong?

There is much discussion revolving around the heart of this question, which involves the continual "presence-absence" balance in current Tunisian political life, and everyone is trying to find a satisfactory answer to it from the standpoint of his interests and socio-political tendencies.

Bourguiba himself is taking part in the attempts to find an answer, presenting in this context as incisive slogan: Let Bourguibism continue without Bourguiba. This slogan of his, as he stated it in his meeting with the members of the political bureau of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party, means clinging to Tunisia's special position in Arab North Africa as an Arab-African Mediterranean state firmly linked to both the European Common Market and the United States of America, without becoming entangled in sharp struggles with any of its sister states to the west or the east. Furthermore, Tunisia also has a definite commitment to the Palestinian cause, based on recognition of the PLO and the national rights of the Palestinian people in the context of international law. International law, as Bourguiba understands it, means adherence to the 1947 United Nations resolutions pertaining to the partition of Palestine between Arabs and Jews. Therefore, Tunisia's reservations about the Camp David agreements stem basically from this concept, which Bourguiba feels Camp David totally ignored.

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At the same time, Bourguiba sees no future for Tunisia after he is gone outside the context of the political-social-economic framework which was arrived at especially after the elimination of the Ahmed Ben Saleh cooperative experiment (an experiment based on a type of "cooperative socialism" inspired by underground organizations in a number of North European countries). The Destourian Socialist Party should continue holding the reins of power, while granting limited opportunities to a number of other political forces and currents, as well as relative freedom of movement in order to "let off steam." The regime should be given an appearance of liberalism which would not threaten the regime's foundations, and it should approve the building of the Tunisian economy on a fundamentally service, trade, financial and tourism basis, in view of Tunisia's lack of significant natural resources.

The Succession of the Nouira-Sayah Duo

In order to ensure this, Bourguiba is throwing his weight into supporting and strengthening the "party apparatus," which is forcefully controlled by Minister of State Mohamed Sayah, who was a leader of the Marxist students before Bourguiba picked him up and propelled him into a position of responsibility in the regime. As he has said more than once, Bourguiba sees an extension of his own personality in Mohamed Sayah, who is only 43 years old. Bourguiba's technique for designing the future of Tunisia once he is gone is based on Party Secretary General and Prime Minister Hedi Nouira's succeeding him to the position of president of the republic, and on Sayah's taking the post of prime minister in addition to his party responsibilities.

It appears that Majidah Wassila Bint Ammar, Bourguiba's wife, who has a forceful political personality, has not concealed her strong reservations about both Hedi Nouira and Sayah, and includes them among the "hidden enemies of Bourguibism." Consequently she does not think it unlikely, once Bourguiba is gone, that the two will play the same roles played by Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping in China, after the death of Mao Zedong, in eliminating Maoism under the guise of fervent support for it while overlooking the extent of the attacks and criticism of Mao in the famous wall newspapers of Peking.

Thus Majidah Wassila calls the Hedi Nouira-Sayah group "the wall newspaper writers of post-Bourguiba Tunisia." In her estimation, this group is popularly despised and has no skill in governing, and will be worthless when Bourguiba's patronage is removed.

Therefore, the group will try to gain popularity through criticising and renouncing Bourguiba and wiping out his heritage.

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The Role of Majidah Wassila

In this connection, Majidah Wassila is trying to form a new group with common interests based on modern national capitalism, especially in the light industries field, out of a number of technocrats and politicians either in power now (the ministers of health, interior and justice) or out of power (such as Mohamed Masmoudi, former foreign minister and godfather of the Tunisian-Libyan unity agreement which lasted only one day and which resulted in the Hedi Nouira-Sayah group's successfully purging him and banishing him abroad, the object of Bourguiba's anger. This was before Majidah Wassila brought about a reconciliation between him and the president and he returned to Tunisia.).

This new political-economic group headed by Majidah Wassila intends to strengthen its positions within the party, the ruling regime and socio-economic life, in particular the banking and light industry fields. It also intends to bring about strong contacts with Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the PLO. Wassila herself initiated these contacts by making numerous visits, under various pretexts, to these countries. The pivotal plan presented by this group is that once Bourguiba is gone, Tunisia will be exposed to fierce social and political pressures which the Hedi Nouira-Sayah group would be unable to weather because of their lack of popular bases. Salvation must come through supporting a modern enlightened group with technical and economic ability and some measure of popular trust, which would lead the country by modern, more open methods while preserving the essence of Bourguibism. Otherwise the radical elements, whether religious or communist, will have a great opportunity for activity and direct or indirect control over Tunisia's destiny.

As proof, this group offers the huge labor-popular demonstrations which spread their radical slogans throughout Tunisia and which almost threatened to topple the regime in January 1978, at which time the radicals exploited the purge struggle between leaders of the ruling party and Labor Leader Achour. Outside the circle of power, there crystallized an increasingly strong opposition intent on bringing about essential changes in the system, especially its political form, whereby the multi-party system would be replaced by a one-party system.

The Opposition's Make-up

Obviously, this opposition consists of a number of independent groups, all of which spring up within the ruling Destourian Party through their collision, for various reasons, with the absolutist personality of Bourguiba and the arbitrariness of his representatives in the ruling party apparatus. This opposition centers basically around three groups.

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The first is the Ahmed Ben Saleh group, which in Tunisia is called the socialist-cooperative trend. Its power is based on intellectual circles, beneficiaries of the cooperative movement, and some labor sectors. The party apparatus has concentrated its efforts, making use of police repression, on wiping out this group and imprisoning its leader, Ben Saleh, who later was able to flee to Algeria and then to Austria, where the "socialist international" received him with open arms through the influence of his friend, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky.

This group intends repeating the cooperative experiment after ridding it of the mistakes and negative aspects which contaminated it. It has declared its willingness to enter into alliances with any other forces in a political framework based on the multi-party system. The Tunisian authorities have ruthlessly pursued the members of this group who are in Tunisia, and have thrown most of its leaders in jail. The group has suffered continual repressive campaigns to limit the influence and effectiveness of this movement.

Then there is the group of former Defense Minister Ahmed Mestiri, who on 10 June 1978, along with some of his friends, announced the establishment of the Socialist Democrats Movement and issued two weekly newspapers. One is in Arabic and is called AL-RA'I, the chief editor of which is Mohamed Moadia, one of Tunisia's outstanding democratic intellectuals, and the other is in French and is called DEMOCRATIE.

This movement has attracted effective, active elements from the middle- and petty-bourgeoisie and from intellectual circles--writers, university professors and technocrats, not to mention small- and middle-class peasants. Its power comes from the forceful personality of Mestiri, who won a majority of votes over Hedi Nouira in the central committee of the last Destourian Party conference, which forced Bourguiba to personally intervene on Nouira's behalf. So Mestiri announced his withdrawal from the party, and a number of party leaders and members went with him, most importantly Beji Caid Essebsi and Boulares. Also, the movement's leaders insisted that the entire leadership should stay in Tunisia and to be willing to pay the price for their opposition to the ruling regime, and that their newspapers should be open to all other movements, including the Tunisian communists, so that they might express their views in spite of the ideological and political differences between them and the movement.

The movement officially requested the Tunisian authorities to permit them to become a legal, recognized party. But the authorities refused to grant this permission, on the pretexts that the constitution, which does not mention either a single-party or a multi-party system, does not grant it the authority to permit the establishment of a party, and that the ruling Destourian Party itself has no permission to do so, and that whoever wants to establish a party should bear the personal responsibility. However Mestiri, who is a lawyer, stresses that the government's non-issuance of

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such permission violates the law on establishing societies, which the courts have ruled applies to parties as well, and that the government, by refusing to issue this permission, intends to deter the people and the masses which support the movement from joining it or taking part in legal political action.

This movement's proclaimed program is based on rebuilding the Tunisian regime according to democratic principles, party diversity, the independence of the labor union, peasant and student movements, and approval of a centralized economic development plan for building economic infrastructures which would guarantee the growth of national production and the improvement of the people's standard of living without impairing national capital's freedom to invest privately.

At the same time, the movement stresses Tunisia's need for an independent foreign policy based on non-alignment and for an Arab policy revolving around the building of a greater Arab Maghreb which would be part of a democratic Arab union, starting with some type of economic integration, unification of educational and cultural programs among the Arab countries, and closing ranks with the Palestinian people and the PLO against Zionism.

Thirdly, there is the group of Habib Achour, member of the Destourian Party's political bureau and president of the labor federation. At present he is in prison, having been sentenced to 15 years on the charge of having led the January strikes. It appears that Habib Achour, who has followed a policy of changing the regime from within, depends on the power and influence of the labor federation, for it has become a power center which seriously threatens the Nouira-Sayah party apparatus group and which therefore must be eliminated.

His supporters stress that the party apparatus concocted the bloody sabotage incidents which developed within the demonstrations, in order to justify the severe police repressive measures taken against them. In spite of the small number of Achour supporters, they include popular, political and union circles which are highly aware and organized and are able to maneuver. Consequently the movement is attracting all political opposition forces so as to benefit from their experiences. It appears that the movement is basically inclined towards cooperation with the Socialist Democratic Movement led by Mestiri, by virtue of their similar methods and goals.

Reliable sources confirm that serious negotiations are taking place today among these three opposition forces, in order to establish a strong front to confront the ruling party apparatus, and in order to be ready to fill the vacuum when Bourguiba disappears from the political arena.

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The Nourra-Sayah Scheme

The party apparatus is aware of the danger of this front's being formed, and has therefore concentrated its activity on confronting it on two axes:

1. Reconstituting the Destourian Socialist Party at its next congress in September 1979, so as to ensure the loyalty of its entire leadership to the Nourra-Sayah group on the one hand, and to reinforce it with new elements on the other hand, especially intellectuals and national capitalists, and to consolidate its political and administrative control over the labor federation.
2. Continually sowing conflict, by various methods, among the three opposition forces in order to disrupt them and keep them from uniting into one front. This is being done by increasing the degree of repression against them and discriminating among them in granting freedom of movement and expression, not to mention using the authority of the state to permit and prohibit commercial and economic activities and giving preference to some members over others of this group or that.

Opposition From Outside the Regime

After this there remains the opposition from outside the regime. Despite their limited nature, the forces making up this opposition are remarkably active and effective. On the other hand, some are so incompatible with others as to come to the point of violent collision.

The first of these forces is the Moslem Brotherhood, which has begun openly spreading its appeals in mosques and rural mass meetings, calling for the establishment of an Islamic state and criticizing some sectarian manifestations and liberalizations of Islamic Shari'ah principles which the Bourguiba regime is bringing about in Tunisian society. The Brotherhood also criticizes the regime's stand on the Palestinian issue and its approval of the 1948 UN resolution on partition, and demands the complete liberation of Palestinian soil.

In government circles it is frequently said that this group is receiving some political and material support from a neighboring Arab country, and they cite as evidence the fact that in its publications the group is always referring to the "true Islamic regime" experiment in Libya.

The second force is the Communist Party, the legality of which the regime withdrew in 1965. Its influence is concentrated in limited intellectual and labor circles. Today, after the violent schisms which shook it, it is raising the slogan of a broad front for democracy and social justice.

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The third force is represented by the People's Socialist Party, which includes New Left groups demanding armed struggle to change the system by force. It is an extremely limited party, the majority of whose leaders the regime has been able to imprison.

And so, after a long recuperation in West Germany, Bourguiba is about to return to Tunisia, where struggles of a severity previously unknown to the country are in progress. What will be his attitude towards them?

Those closest to Bourguiba stress that he considers the Socialist Democratic Movement the real danger to the regime and to Bourguibism after he is gone, and that he is thinking of confronting this danger by trying to cement mutual interests between the party apparatus (Nouira-Sayah) group and the new political-economic group supported by his wife, Majidah Was-sila Bint Ammar. Will he succeed?

The answer to this question depends on the results and the quality of leadership of the Destourian Socialist Party's political bureau, which will be chosen at the next party congress in September 1979.

All that President Bourguiba can do today is hope that God will let him live until then.

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