

APPROVED FOR RELEASE: 2007/02/08: CIA-RDP82-00850R000100090032-6

21 SEPTEMBER 1979

(FOUO 36/79)

1 OF 1

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

JPRS L/8673

21 September 1979

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 36/79)



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

NOTE

JPRS publications contain information primarily from foreign newspapers, periodicals and books, but also from news agency transmissions and broadcasts. Materials from foreign-language sources are translated; those from English-language sources are transcribed or reprinted, with the original phrasing and other characteristics retained.

Headlines, editorial reports, and material enclosed in brackets [] are supplied by JPRS. Processing indicators such as [Text] or [Excerpt] in the first line of each item, or following the last line of a brief, indicate how the original information was processed. Where no processing indicator is given, the information was summarized or extracted.

Unfamiliar names rendered phonetically or transliterated are enclosed in parentheses. Words or names preceded by a question mark and enclosed in parentheses were not clear in the original but have been supplied as appropriate in context. Other unattributed parenthetical notes within the body of an item originate with the source. Times within items are as given by source.

The contents of this publication in no way represent the policies, views or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

For further information on report content call (703) 351-2833 (Near East); 351-2501 (Iran, Afghanistan); 351-3165 (North Africa).

COPYRIGHT LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING OWNERSHIP OF MATERIALS REPRODUCED HEREIN REQUIRE THAT DISSEMINATION OF THIS PUBLICATION BE RESTRICTED FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

JPRS L/8673

21 September 1979

NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

(FOUO 36/79)

CONTENTS

PAGE

NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Morocco Said To Have Regained Initiative in Sahara
(Jean-Louis Buchet; JEUNE AFRIQUE, 29 Aug 79) 1

Mauritania Trying To Maintain Equilibrium Between Algeria-
Morocco
(Francisco Vergara; JEUNE AFRIQUE, 29 Aug 79) 3

ALGERIA

Nicaragua Delegation Terms Contacts in Algeria 'Fruitful'
(PRELA, 7 Sep 79) 4

EGYPT

Instability, Confessional Strife Said Due to Sadat's Policies
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 26 Jul 79) 5

IRAN

Bakhtiar Compares Khomeyni to Hitler
(Shahpur Bakhtiar Interview; PARIS MATCH, 24 Aug 79). 9

MOROCCO

Moroccan Officials Discuss Sahara War, Friction With Algeria
(Guy Sitbon; LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR, 3-9 Sep 79) 17

- a -

[III - NE & A - 121 FOUO]

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

MOROCCO SAID TO HAVE REGAINED INITIATIVE IN SAHARA

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 29 Aug 79 pp 12, 13

[Article by Jean-Louis Buchet: "The Hour of Truth"]

[Text] Morocco has regained the initiative in the Sahara, thanks to the defection of its Mauritanian ally.

In breaking the alliance that was made with Morocco in November 1975, did not Mauritania serve the interests of the Moroccan kingdom? In any case, the "definitive peace" agreement that was signed on 5 August with the Polisario supplied Hassan II with an unexpected opportunity to resume a long-lost initiative. To be sure, Morocco is still isolated. But it no longer has to endure a bothersome ally and it occupies all of Western Sahara.

Could one imagine for a moment that the Moroccans would allow the Polisario to settle in Tiris el Gharbia? Their position doubtless would have been more difficult if, for example, Mauritania had declared that it would hand over the territory to the OAU [Organization of African Unity], so that the referendum advocated this past July by the Monrovia summit could be organized.

By occupying the former Mauritanian Sahara (re-baptized Oued-Eddahab) with a great deal of publicity and solemn statements, Hassan II is carrying out a paying operation on the domestic front. In the eyes of the public, the king has proved that he is capable of counterattacking--at little cost. Of course, there was the battle of Biranzaren which the Moroccans are striving hard to present as a victory, even though they admit enormous losses and the absence of prisoners or hostile victims.

These rigorous engagements indicate that there will be a protracted war, that it will be costly, and that a military defeat of the Polisario is quite unlikely. But the Moroccan troops have been reinforced throughout the Sahara and, in spite of certain shortages of materiel, they will not

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

be easily ousted. As long as the Americans grant the weapons that were requested of them, Morocco should not change its policy at all, in spite of its isolation. In answer to a question from our special correspondent, Mohammed Selhami (see article below), Hassan II, at the time of his press conference on 19 August, treated the OAU with scorn ("tom-tom conferences, where one distributes checks...").

Having said that, nothing is now settled. The war will continue and in a few weeks Morocco will no longer have any initiative: not on the military plane where, because of the fatality of things, it is in the hands of Saharan guerrillas who continue to receive reinforcements; and not on the diplomatic plane where, in the aftermath of the Dakhla ceremonies, the Moroccans will always have as their main argument their intimate conviction of the Moroccan character of the Sahara.

In the face of this, the Polisario Front and its patron, Algeria, will pursue that slow and tireless daily work that has made it possible for them to accumulate points since 1975. Tomorrow, Morocco will be on the bench of the accused at the summit of the nonaligned in Havana; then in the UN; or at some other international tribunes. The men of the Polisario know that a military victory is beyond their reach and make no secret of it. But they also know that, day by day, in Africa and throughout the world, they are winning bits of recognition which, little by little, could create new Palestinians-- so that it will no longer be possible to dispense with them in any attempt at a solution--a scenario that seems inevitable, unless Algeria ceases to support the Polisario. This is a hypothesis that one could still envisage, but one does not see why President Chadli's government would abandon his proteges. In this connection, Hassan II, who has proved to be particularly conciliatory with regard to Algiers in his 19 August press conference, let it be understood that the 1972 agreement concerning the borders between the two countries, which establishes the sovereignty of Algeria over Tindouf, could be confirmed in a more favorable context--a context that one would see is well marked by a change in the attitude of the Polisario fighters, characterized as "Mauritanian" and called upon to take over Nouakchott's authority! In plain language, does that not mean exchanging Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara for a Mauritania under Algerian influence?--a "deal," to speak bluntly, that would be acceptable only by a very weakened Algeria.

Finally, it is Mauritania, whose behavior we are trying to analyze below (see Francisco Vergara's blocked-off article), which appears as the biggest loser in the affair. Treated with a certain scorn by Hassan II, it risks continuing to bear the cost of the war and of the traditional Moroccan-Algerian rivalry in the region--a situation that will not fail to preoccupy other neighbors, beginning with Senegal. Exhausted, tossed about, threatened with bursting apart, having played its last cards poorly, Mauritania today, more than ever, seems to have a precarious future.

COPYRIGHT: Jeune Afrique. GRUPJIA 1979

8255

2

CSO: 4400

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

MAURITANIA TRYING TO MAINTAIN EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN ALGERIA-MOROCCO

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 29 Aug 79 p 13

[Article by Francisco Vergara: "Mauritania: The Narrow Door"]

[Text] Will Mauritania succeed in withdrawing from the Saharan war, without Morocco and Algeria agreeing on an overall solution of the problem? Two years ago, such an idea was inconceivable to most Mauritians. The army at that time was greatly divided over the policy to be followed. Twelve thousand Moroccan soldiers were stationed in Mauritania; Morocco was far from being isolated diplomatically; and there was no apparent split in national purpose. Today the facts of the matter are completely different.

The signing of the "definitive peace" with the Polisario on 5 August in Algiers was received by the people of Nouakchott with a certain amount of relief, but without enthusiasm. In spite of the establishment in Rabat of a "Committee of Free Officers for the Defense of the Mauritanian Fatherland," unity among the corps of officers does not seem impressive. The fear of a coup d'etat supported by the Moroccan army--a hypothesis that was feared in 1977 and in 1978--has been dispelled. On the other hand, it is almost a certainty that the war will continue for some time even on Mauritanian territory. Mauritania will not then be able either to counter the attacks launched by the Polisario from its territory or the pursuit operations of Morocco.

Under these circumstances, will Mauritania be able to keep from slipping into full alignment with Algeria? This is the fear that was manifested by the Mauritians who were in opposition to the 5 August agreements. The Mauritanian military henceforth hope to maintain complete equilibrium between Algeria and Morocco. It is a difficult bet: military tension with one of its neighbors, they believe, would render impossible the policy of austerity and of reform that Mauritania wants to pursue.

COPYRIGHT: Jeune Afrique GRUPJIA 1979

8255
CSO: 4400

3
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ALGERIA

NICARAGUA DELEGATION TERMS CONTACTS IN ALGERIA 'FRUITFUL'

Havana PRELA in Spanish 1530 GMT 7 Sep 79 PA

[Text] Algiers, 7 Sep (PL)--Nicaraguan Defense Minister Bernardino Larios Mentel today described here his meetings with ranking Algerian and Libyan commands as very fruitful.

Larios Mentel left Algiers this morning heading a delegation of the junta of the government of national reconstruction, which also includes Defense Deputy Minister Jose Valdivia Hidalgo.

In statements for this agency, both the defense minister and deputy minister affirmed that the Algerian and Libyan governments had been highly receptive to their country's urgent need for aid.

A Nicaraguan delegation will come to Algeria shortly, the Nicaraguan leaders announced in commenting on the results of their meetings yesterday with Col Kasdi Merbah, defense ministry secretary general and member of the national liberation front's political bureau.

Larios and Valdiva said Nicaragua needs the nonaligned countries' active solidarity to organize the defense of its revolution. Regarding this, they added, it is hoped that the Arab governments contacted will provide aid.

They also referred to Israel's military aid to Anastasio Somaza's regime and denounced the fact that Tel Aviv continues to send weapons to Central America.

It is no secret, they stressed, that El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala provided refuge to more than 3,000 Somozist guardsmen, who escaped with all their weapons.

The danger of an attack exists, but the Nicaraguan people are sure "any invader who manages to come into our country will not be able to leave." they added. The Nicaraguan delegation, which began its tour of North Africa and Europe 10 days ago, was seen off by the chief commander of the Algerian general staff.

CSO: 4410

4

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EGYPT

INSTABILITY, CONFESSIONAL STRIFE SAID DUE TO SADAT'S POLICIES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 26 Jul 79 pp 24-25

[Article: "Egypt: Pope of Copts Vies With al-Sadat's 'Shaykhs' in Normalization of Relations With Israel"]

[Text] While "economic stability" has imposed the austere regime of al-Sadat on Egyptians, they have become a people who do not trade in meat. Family and confessional struggles indicate intense anxiety about the consequences of the "political stability" which the Egyptian president says he has provided for his people.

The so-called pan-Arab press has focused in particular on an issue about which it wants to convince public opinion, namely that Egypt is the country of stability and that the other Arab countries are dominated by instability.

What the official press means by the word "stability" is another matter, because even if we rely on the news and articles published in Egyptian newspapers themselves, the picture in fact shows undercurrents which are concealed through heroic effort. They are currents which have no connection, either intimate or remote, with the concept of stability, discussed by President Anwar al-Sadat in his speech inaugurating the People's Assembly.

There is no space here to elaborate on the real economic situation, because the contributing factors of the slump are greater than any attempt being made to conceal them. Perhaps it is sufficient to point to the appeal for help which the government of Egypt made to the summit conference of industrial nations in Tokyo, asking for \$3 billion annually to compensate for the aid and support which the Arab nations formerly gave.

However, the danger in this is that the ordinary citizen has begun to rid himself of the illusion of prosperity associated with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. For example, the price of a kilo of beef recently jumped to 2.5 pounds. In other words, the citizen who receives the minimum wage (40 piasters per day) must work 6 days a week in order to buy 1 kilogram of meat. Perhaps it may be said that the matter of not eating meat is not problem for the great majority of low-level employees, office workers, laborers and

5

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

farmers, because, as is said in Egypt, "They do not trade in meat." This is true, but the new, violent wave of inflation can by no means indicate the beginning of any stability. Perhaps the contrary is true, for the simple reason that millionaires in Egypt are sprouting up like "mushrooms in the forest," to use the well-known European metaphor. They are making their millions during difficult times, far from production sites. Consequently they do not add any real value to the national economy.

We will leave the economic situation, with all its components which warn of total instability in the future, to pose this question: Is there a semblance of stability on the political level as such?

Let us begin with the ruling party itself.

Through elections, the results of which were determined in advance with his minister of interior, President al-Sadat aimed at getting rid of the headache of real opposition in the People's Assembly. However, stripping the elections by force of law of any political content has stirred up all the latent depths of group and family strife and created intense fragmentation in the countryside. This has had reverberations on the ruling party itself, exacerbating conflicts within its ranks and between it and the official opposition represented by the Socialist Action Party. The magazine AL-SIYASI was thus prompted to ask, "Is there a crisis in the Action Party?" The fact is that the crisis is deep-rooted in the Action Party for reasons having to do with National Party practices against it in the elections, since an entire wing in it, the former Masr al-Fatah, was toppled.

On the other hand, because of the practices of the ruling party in normalizing relations with Israel in a hasty manner, and because of increasing corruption in the government apparatus, the Action Party has been cornered. This makes the Action Party deviate occasionally from the line of "noble" or "canned" opposition.

Deterring Official Opposition

President al-Sadat has learned from experience and realized that the "game of democracy" and the game of multiplicity [of parties] are burdensome and oppressive. Thus he has begun to think of ways to ensure "detering" the official opposition, if it oversteps its bounds. When the Action Party obtained 34 seats in the People's Assembly, a number which could be influential and troublesome in certain circumstances, he began to deal with the Action Party in a manner devised by Mamduh Salim, president of the former Egypt Party. It can be summarized as "snatching deputies" or stripping the opposing party of its deputies.

The former prime minister used this method with the Independents' Party which began in the former Assembly with 22 deputies and ended up with only three. When Ibrahim Sukri noticed that the snatching procedure was going to be used once again, he became infuriated. He promptly sent a fiery article to the newspapers in which he threatened to halt these methods by any means, including resorting to justice.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

However, it seems that the rancor which the elections left between the ruling party and the Action Party was so intense and deep that the vice president of the ruling party, Fakri Makram 'Abid, was obliged to raise the slogan of "national conciliation and dressing wounds from the elections." Observers feel, however, that this is unattainable.

What about the ruling party itself?

The real ordeal facing this party is that despite its effort to make the election battle devoid of any political meaning, the measures associated with suppressing the opposition and falsifying the elections brought about the opposite result which was the "politicization" of the masses who lived under the delusion of slogans having to do with democracy and the sovereignty of law. This delusion has been abolished to a great extent.

Has the ability of the party's deputies to make use of street politics declined in places and vanished altogether in other places? What does the authority rely on to impose stability? On increasing the role of the apparatus more and more? In the aftermath of the elections, the process called "rebuilding the National Party from bottom to top" began. But who was entrusted with carrying out this process? It was Vice President Husni Mubarak.

As we know that Husni Mubarak, due to his military past, is not the right man to carry out this procedure, and if we add that his political job is to supervise the security apparatus, we can forecast the results of the rebuilding of the National Party. It will be done on the basis of merger with the apparatus of the state, including its wing for security and repression. However, will this lead to more "stability"?

The answer is all too obvious.

Another matter has to do with the elements of national unity within the country. It is the issue of relations between Moslems and Copts. It is an indisputable fact that there is a single people in Egypt, since the difference in religious doctrine does not constitute any basis for discrimination, division or separation. However, isn't it well known historically that all hostile forces have played on the doctrinal difference between Egypt's Moslems and Copts? In addition to the periods of British domination, Israel and world Zionism have joined forces to play this game throughout the Arab homeland, especially in the East. Here the question arises about the extent to which one can say the authority in Egypt has enhanced stability in connection with the two elements of the nation.

After the July revolution and during the 18 years of 'Abd al-Nasir's rule, manifestations of confessional friction disappeared to a great extent, but they have certainly reappeared in more intense form under the rule of President al-Sadat. If we assume for the sake of argument that al-Sadat's policy has had no role in the kindling of confessional friction and strife, we see that the president's American and Israeli allies are playing their game in Egypt with complete freedom. An example once again is what happened in the recent elections.

7

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Pope Shanudih III, head of the Orthodox Coptic Church, issued his directives to priests with the help of candidates of the ruling party. This was an initiative without precedent in the history of the Coptic Church, whose leaders were anxious not to involve the church in the turmoil of party politics and ideological conflicts. This course has alarmed many Copts, but Pope Shanudih and his followers justify their position as follows:

President al-Sadat has solved the dispute between Moslem Egypt and Jewish Israel. It is common knowledge that Moslems consider Jews to be "most violently hostile toward them." If this problem were "solved," and with an increased American presence in Egypt and the region, it would all lead toward an improved position for Egyptian Christians. (That is not to mention the World Council of Churches which is directed in part by the CIA. It has succeeded for many years in penetrating the Coptic Church, whose cultural and financial relations with American circles have been increasing.)

Nevertheless, this question remains: Will this lead toward stability in relations on a sound basis between the two elements of the country?

What Pope Shanudih Forgets

This seems highly uncertain because Pope Shanudih, head of the Coptic Church, forgets certain basic features in the history of Egypt, namely that the causes of confessional and racial friction disappear as the struggle of the Egyptian people grows, on the one hand against imperialism and Zionism, and on the other hand for the cause of joining forces with the rest of the Arab nation. He forgets that stability in Egypt as a whole is dependent on stability in its relations with its Arab nation. He forgets ultimately that Zionism is not the enemy of Moslems alone, but of all Arabs of all faiths and minorities.

As a result, the attempt by leaders of the Coptic Church to join the Coptic movement of Egypt to the movement of the ruling party will bring down on millions of ordinary Coptic citizens the consequences of the path followed by this party on both pan-Arab and national levels, and this will fuel discrimination against them.

A final observation remains. The ruling party is actually incapable of building real unity transcending any confessional differences or disputes between Moslems and Copts. Proof of this is the fact that despite broad claims about the popularity of the National Party, it was unable through the electoral battle to solve the problem of the arrival of Coptic deputies by way of direct election. As for Fakri Makram 'Abid, first he was shut out, then they said he had won 100 percent of the votes, and then President al-Sadat was forced to "appoint" 10 Coptic deputies to the Assembly after the election results appeared.

Observers think that the authority's exaggerated demonstration of the instability of the Arab world actually reflects the authority's desire to hide instability within Egypt itself.

COPYRIGHT: Al-Watan al-'Arabi 1979

7811

8

CSO: 4802

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

IRAN

BAKHTIAR COMPARES KHOMEYNI TO HITLER

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 24 Aug 79 pp 53-55

[Interview with former Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar by Vick Vance in Paris: "Bakhtiar--'Khomeyni Is Lost..The People Will Sweep Him Away'"; date not given]

[Text] The shah's last days in Tehran, Khomeyni's seizure of power, the corruption of the mullahs, the lamentable state and economic ruin of the Islamic Republic: Shahpur Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister, received Vick Vance in his Paris retreat. He thinks that the ayatollah will fall by himself, without even a counterrevolution. And he does not rule out a return of the monarchy.

[Question] How do you see the future of the Iranian revolution?

[Answer] It is not a revolution, properly speaking. It is a gigantic muddle. For me, the leaders of a revolution--if a revolution is still possible in this second half of the 20th Century--must have general ideas on the economy and social questions. One cannot, like Khomeyni, content oneself with saying: I want to do something Islamic, pure and rigorous. Because truly, if Iran has never had the occasion to be Islamized in 1,400 years, it never will be. But what I can assure you is that Islam will lose far more than Iran. This is the essential point. Iran, for its part, will get back on its feet sooner or later.

[Question] What pushes Ayatollah Khomeyni--ambition or fanaticism?

[Answer] The social and political questions; and even the religious application of things, in a modern state, demand what I call a preparation. It is not at age 65 that one begins to get into politics. It is only that Khomeyni has made his political debut very late. During his 15 years of exile, he perhaps had a chance to study the problems with a little more diligence and insight. But he came back with completely narrow-minded, archaic and sterile concepts.

[Question] And have you ever met him?

9

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Answer] Never. As a matter of principle, religious leaders in all countries, including the Catholic ones, have a sort of senseless pride. When Khomeyni returned to Tehran, the people believed it was a light falling from heaven. And it made his head spin, if I may put it that way. I tried to make contact with him when he was in Paris, so that no one could blame me for not having done anything. I am very happy to have taken this step and not to have succeeded. For even if confirmed by him, I would have been able to stay at my post for exactly 24 hours.

Not being able to find anything, either in my political past or elsewhere, he said: he's an assassin. When I left the prime ministership, there were six persons in prison. I mean political prisoners. Two of them had not yet been tried, and two were sick and in the hospital. Two others were spies. All the rest--that is, hundreds and hundreds--had been freed. SAVAK had been abolished. The Pahlavi Foundation had been placed in state ownership. The imperial commission charged to carry out investigations on anything whatsoever had been dissolved.

[Question] What, in your opinion, are the biggest mistakes he has made since his return?

[Answer] Khomeyni has made nothing but mistakes. Nationalizing the banks, for example, was a heavy financial misdeed. All those banks are in bankruptcy today. In reality, he is not at all prepared to run a country. What is more, there is his contempt. It reminds me a bit of the contempt Hitler could have--with due allowance for the differences--towards the policy of Bismarck. Not being able to equal Bismarck, Hitler wanted to give himself his own completely individual manner. We have seen the result. At present, I am sad because my predictions have unfortunately been confirmed with great speed.

[Question] How to get out of this impasse? By a military coup d'etat? An action by the exiles, by the opposition?

[Answer] For my part, I will keep up the fight. Thousands of people have left Iran. They were not all corrupt persons or thieves. There were intellectuals among them, university professors, students who had the illusion of finding Iran free and democratic again. All these people were undeceived, disappointed. What they cannot understand is that there has been no revolution but rather an upheaval, which is not at all the same thing. For even Castro, Nasir, or any of those gentlemen at least had ideas about what the future society could be.

[Question] How do you explain the bad feelings toward you on the part of lay opponents, such as Sanjabi and others?

[Answer] The great trouble with the National Front has been that its leaders were the most incapable. The most incapable never take a firm position in the face of events. This is why Sanjabi, who--and this is of great importance--had no mandate to negotiate with Khomeyni, made a sort of pledge of

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

allegiance and why he wasted his time with it. He was received with a contempt, a scorn.... He himself wanted to latch onto the mullahs, and here is the result. I knew in advance that the soldiers' sword thrust or the mullah's executioner amounted to the same thing. What comforts me is that in the last month certain Iranian newspapers have begun to mention my name or put my picture in the paper. In Iran, there are people who say: we have come out of a corrupt dictatorship only to fall into an aggressive dictatorship. The old one was abrasive, the new one is turbulent.

[Question] And very negative?

[Answer] Very negative, yes. At present, they are having a poor prostitute and some homosexuals shot. One does not govern a country with nonsense of that kind.

[Question] Do you see a way out for Iran?

[Answer] I don't know. In any case, I believe that Khomeyni, by the method that he has chosen--if one can speak of a method--by the muddle that he has created, is doing the job himself. It is not so much the trouble I take to plot against his regime. Popular discontent can only go on growing. You see the number of unemployed constantly increasing, industrial production down by half.

In the life of a man, of any social condition whatsoever, there are two essential things. First of all, freedom to think, to take positions. Secondly, trying to understand. When Khomeyni declares that he wants an Islamic republic, does he know exactly what he wants? I do not think so. In any case, Bazargan, who is a religious, honest man, it must be recognized, but incapable of running even a small second-rate factory--well, this dear man himself declares that he does not understand exactly what "Islamic republic" signifies. And so you see the result. And Bazargan declares every day: "I am not up to date." He knows nothing. And one administrates this way? "Wait, I read it in the newspapers, my good man...." This is absolutely insupportable. Despite all our old friendship with Bazargan, I cannot accept this. If a man is responsible, let him do the job. If he cannot, let him admit it.

[Question] The Hoveyda case, as a matter of fact--what do you think of it?

[Answer] The way he was tried is ignoble. He said he was innocent. But he should have said to the shah: "I don't agree with that, I don't want to do such and such. I'm leaving." Therefore it cannot be said that Hoveyda was not responsible. After all, he did remain prime minister for 13 years!

[Question] But he never profited from it himself.

[Answer] That is even worse. If he did not profit from it, why did he let all that corruption develop around him? An example: Tuhani, who was minister of electricity, then minister of agriculture, was a multimillionaire. He brought agriculture to its knees.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

But to return to this question of the prime minister and the shah's ministers, I find, for my part, that they were responsible. They should be tried. It is for this reason that I got the Parliament to pass a law which condemns them in accordance with Article 80 of the Constitution, according to their responsibilities, but in the presence of a jury and not in the filthy circumstances in which those other people have been put to death. With sentencing to death, I don't agree. But to say that Hoveyda and his clique are innocent is false.

[Question] The shah considered that during the 13 years that Hoveyda spent in power, he had not revealed the truth to him, that he had put up a sort of barrier and screen between him and his people.

[Answer] I believe this is false. The king had just as much responsibility as Hoveyda. And besides, Hoveyda could in any case have quit his job. One does not shoot a man who refuses to be prime minister. For the king to say "I knew nothing" is not supportable. Moreover, it was not through Hoveyda that he was informed. He had his commissions, his inspectors, his system of military and civilian espionage, SAVAK, etc. On the supposition that this assertion by the king is a true one, it should not be forgotten that several persons, including myself, had sent to him, 2 years and 2 months before that, a famous letter that said: "The country is lost." We sent this letter directly to the king. We gave him to understand that if he did not apply the Constitution, he was not a constitutional king.

[Question] Who signed this letter along with you?

[Answer] Sandjabi and another.

[Question] What was the king's reaction? Did he have a reply?

[Answer] When he asked to see me, things were already nearly lost. I was called the "Kerensky of Iran." Kerensky was Nicholas II's last prime minister. He was a very honest man and very brilliant. Except that when he was called, it was already too late. Lenin was already in Kronstadt.

[Question] What did the shah say to you?

[Answer] He said to me: "The country is in a state of breakdown...." Therefore the king may not say that he was not up to date on anything. We had written to him, and on several occasions had given him to understand that things were going catastrophically. He did not want to hear this. All the political parties, all the democratic political personalities, the nationalists of all shades, alerted him. But he had ended by having an opinion of himself not justified by anything.

[Question] It was said that he had changed much in the last years, that he had notions of grandeur....

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Answer] In the last 3 or 4 years, he had become more and more proud of himself, whereas I repeat, 2 years and 2 months earlier we had written him a letter that spelled everything out clearly. And he said, it appears: "But who are these people? They are failures, good-for-nothings. They don't know how to do anything," etc. Therefore neither the king nor Hoveyda can pretend that they are innocent. Likewise, it is not I, nor even that mediocre Sandjabi, who governed the country for 25 years.

[Question] What did the shah say to you before leaving Tehran?

[Answer] He asked me to follow him in a small plane of the royal fleet. We had a conversation. Generalities. Nothing special. He asked me to allow several of his favorites to leave. For two or three, I agreed, for I found them unimportant. For others--who are locked up at present--I refused even though he insisted.

[Question] And if Khomeyni were to die. He is 79, after all.

[Answer] I, for my part, would not die of grief if he did. In a sense it is a good thing that he has come back, for the Khomeyni myth has popped like a balloon. In the last analysis, my whole strategy has been to accept his returning while at the same time convinced that he would do nothing good. If we had prevented him from returning, all the people would still be howling. At present the country is producing nothing. The income from oil is going to people who are braying like donkeys the whole day long.

[Question] You know that officially, there is talk of the corruption of Khomeyni's son and son-in-law.

[Answer] There are not only the son and son-in-law, but all the mullahs. More or less all of them, in a word. A great number of mullahs are corrupt. The proof... I know exactly how much one has to pay to leave Iran, I do not speak for myself. I paid nothing. But I know people who have left Iran by way of the south and the west in the last 6 months. They paid between 5,000 and 100,000 tomans, or about 3 or 4 million centimes.

[Question] Do you believe in a possible return of the shah or of the monarchy with his son?

[Answer] A return of the shah, no, I do not think so. As regards the monarchy, that depends on a lot of contingencies, and especially on the desire of the Iranians themselves. In the meantime, I cannot accept either the way the shah governed or the way Khomeyni wants to govern. I am against both.

[Question] Officially, what is the shah's status? The Islamic Republic has been decreed, but the end of the monarchy has never been decreed. Officially, Khomeyni has never dethroned the shah.

[Answer] It has been declared that since we have had an Islamic Republic, the monarchy has automatically been abolished. This is the reasoning of

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

some people. In reality, it was necessary to convoke a constituent assembly, which alone could depose the king, abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. Khomeyni is a creature, a reaction to the shah's 25-year regime. Without this regime, without this corruption, without this mess, without these tortures, Khomeyni would have nothing in particular to say. When he arrived, he could have, if he had been up to his task, set up a strong democratic state by carrying out extremely bold--in the economic sense of the term--reforms. And those who are proletarians--let us say, people without wealth but who have not profited: he could have pushed them forward and stopped the land speculators. All this could have been done.

[Question] Then why didn't he do it?

[Answer] He did not understand it. One cannot, at the end of the 20th Century, govern a country if one does not know how to read a map. It would be very difficult!

[Question] It has even been said that it isn't the real Khomeyni there, that a puppet has replaced him.

[Answer] Puppet or not, it is he who makes the decisions. However, it isn't that Khomeyni's entourage has only imbeciles in it: Shari'atmadari, for example, is a competent type, well-informed, far more level-headed, more balanced, more modern than he. I have permitted myself to say that on the strictly religious level, he is well out in front of Khomeyni. And the Iranian and foreign journalists who have met with him--I myself have met him two or three times--say that he is far better versed in the economic, social and political questions of Iran and of the world. Khomeyni once said: "The king must go." And the rest of his speeches were blah-blah-blah, repeated ad nauseam. The king went. On that day, he should either have shut up or set out a political program. He could have said: "Bravo, Bakhtiar, you have been very effective in any case, you got the king to go without the spilling of blood." But this is a man so infatuated with himself, so narrow-minded, that he could not reason that way.

[Question] What exactly do you blame him for? He wants to arrest you and try you. Why?

[Answer] This man wanted me to bow and scrape to him. I said no, and no again! When 4 million people were howling, I said no! That's what I did during the war. I was a young student. When someone would say to me, "Hitler will take the world," I said, "no, he will not." I said, "I will fight." I fought Hitler. So Khomeyni for me is a trifle.

[Question] When you left your office on 11 February, did you really feel your life was in danger?

[Answer] Certainly. If only from the populace. I hid for a time with some very sympathetic people, Iranians, and then I left Iran in circumstances which I cannot tell you about.

14

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Question] Will you tell one day the story of your departure from Iran?

[Answer] Two or 3 years from now, perhaps. Not for my sake, but for the people who sheltered me, who facilitated my departure. I didn't pay a cent.

[Question] What do you think of the appeal by the shah's sister to Iranian women?

[Answer] Ill-timed.

[Question] Do you think he himself should say something?

[Answer] No, the less the better. As for her, the shahbanu, yes.

[Question] And on the subject of the dismantling of the army?

[Answer] It is a gross error, which I have formally condemned. Furthermore, I have just sent a cassette recording to Iran. Obviously, there were some scum, some corrupt persons, who had to be isolated. But the dismantling of the army is going to lead to certain disaster. I have encouraged the soldiers, the officers and the noncommissioned officers, to take heart. I have promised them all my support, to the extent, obviously, to which I can help them.

[Question] What do you think about the army? Do you think there is the risk of a coup d'etat?

[Answer] At present, I do not see it. But if things deteriorate as they are in the process of doing...

[Question] Are there men capable of carrying out a military coup d'etat?

[Answer] There will certainly be some.

[Question] Do you believe that the exiles can do something from the outside?

[Answer] They can organize, yes.

[Question] Why don't you try to meet with these exiles?

[Answer] Many of them are in touch with me--not directly, because they do not know my telephone number. They know now that I am in Paris. Moreover, I intend to set up, in about 10 days from now, a secretariat to establish contact between me and the opponents.

[Question] Don't you find that the world press has somewhat stimulated the upheaval, not to say the revolution?

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Answer] The press was sometimes poorly informed. The essential point is that no one, except for a very small number, of whom I am proud to be one, knew in advance that this could not lead to anything positive. What do you expect when a Sanjabi, at age 75, does not understand that alliance with and allegiance to Khomeyni cannot be fruitful, and how can you expect that a journalist, for example, even if he knew Iran, could discern the country's future more clearly? No one thought that Khomeyni would do what he has done, and I tell you frankly that I believed he would be distinctly better than what he presently is, that he would not lead the country to total disintegration. Moreover, he is a bloodthirsty man, there is no doubt about it.

COPYRIGHT: [1979] par Cogedipresse S.A.

11267
CSO: 4900

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

MOROCCO

MOROCCAN OFFICIALS DISCUSS SAHARA WAR, FRICTION WITH ALGERIA

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 3-9 Sep 79 pp 32-33 LD

[Interview with unnamed Moroccan "political and military leaders" by Guy Sitbon: "The Truth About the Desert War"--date and place not specified]

[Text] In order to find out why Morocco suffers so many defeats in the Sahara I met with Moroccan political and military leaders whom journalists and diplomats are not usually allowed to question. A dialog emerged from these interviews and I am publishing it here. Since my interlocutors spoke to me openly--so they assured me--they did not authorize me to disclose their names. I agreed. Was I wrong to do so?

[Question] The Moroccan Army seems to be coming off worst....

[Answer] You cannot always deal the blows in a fight. Sometimes you have to take them.

[Question] A few days ago you were beaten at Bir Anzaran, now it's Lebourate. That is a lot.

[Answer] We won at Bir Anzaran. Our garrison stood firm although it had fewer men and was less well armed than the assailants.

[Question] You suffered heavy losses that day.

[Answer] So did the enemy. They had to withdraw to their base although their aim was obviously to occupy the territory.

[Question] As regards the Lebourate battle you have gone so far as to condemn your own officers. You seem to have been routed.

[Answer] That was an entirely different case. We forestalled the enemy at Dakhla. They failed to carry their offensive through at Bir Anzaran and so they mounted an even larger-scale operation on Lebourate. They arrived in three columns from three different directions and were commanded

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

by their most famous officers. Our commander had relatively few men--almost 600. He felt he was outnumbered and decided to evacuate. The decision could have been justified if he had withdrawn in an orderly fashion. However, he left equipment--mainly jeeps--for the enemy and evacuated the post in such a way that our losses were heavy--some 50 men. The leaders of this garrison will be courtmartialled. Nonetheless while on the subject of Lebourate we can tell you that the enemy had to flee when one of our neighboring garrisons intervened.

[Question] We are told that the Moroccan Army is incredibly powerful and is capable of intervening anywhere in Africa but it is nevertheless coming off worst....

[Answer] Our army was a conventional army. Hitherto little money was spent on defense. We were neither equipped nor trained for this type of battle.

[Question] What about the enemy?

[Answer] Algeria rounded up Spain's Saharan troops for the Polisario--a transfer which was carried out on the Spanish Government's orders. Those troops have only ever lived and fought on this terrain and they know it extremely well.

[Question] The Polisario has barely 6,000 men. You have 20 times that number.

[Answer] The West Sahara covers 250,000 square km--one half the size of France. We are installed throughout the territory. That is the important point.

[Question] You can follow the movement of the columns arriving from Algeria or Mauritania. Why does your air force not attack them before they attack you?

[Answer] It is not as simple as that. First they do not advance in columns like a parade on the Champs Elysees. The vehicles meet close to the objective. Also the Sahara does not consist of the smooth dunes you see at the cinema. It consists of cliffs and deep gorges. It is impossible to locate the vehicles unless you have sophisticated electronic equipment.

[Question] Why do you have have such equipment?

[Answer] Because our U.S. suppliers refuse to sell it to us.

[Question] Your are joking....

[Answer] Not at all. We have asked them but they refuse because they place a whole series of restrictions on the use of the equipment. They do

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

not mind what our enemies do with the equipment which they sell them. It is worth noting that the Soviets are prepared to sell us all the equipment they have, provided they are paid in cash.

[Question] Why do you not buy their equipment?

[Answer] Because they send technicians as well as weapons.

[Question] The Polisario is said to be better equipped than you.

[Answer] For this type of war they are. And that is not because the Americans do not want to sell us the equipment we need. It is simply because the guerrilla weapons manufactured by the West are of much lower quality than the Soviet weapons. Very much lower. You can only obtain rubbish on the Western market for this type of war.

[Question] The only thing which the Moroccan Army in the Sahara seems to do is to wait to be attacked.

[Answer] We are defending built-up areas and strategic positions. To prevent these positions being bombarded by "Stalin organs," we have to set up a circle of defense around the cities with a radius equal to the range of the guns. In other words 23 km. That requires a very large number of men.

[Question] To no avail since they manage to penetrate your defenses.

[Answer] They have never broken through to a city. However other types of defense could be envisaged which would free some troops and make us more mobile. Our soldiers would prefer to be on the move. Strategic defense is not in our nature.

[Question] These positions have to be kept supplied. Your supply columns often seem to be ambushed?

[Answer] They were often ambushed. We have now found the answer.

[Question] What are they trying to do now?

[Answer] They are trying to round up the inhabitants of the southern Sahara [as published] and deport them to refugee camps in Algeria.

[Question] You mean that they are doing this in the West Sahara? Why are you not stopping them?

[Answer] We are afraid of killing civilians, civilians in Aousert and Tichla.

[Question] So you do not occupy the whole West Sahara as everybody claims.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Answer] The Mauritians hold some positions together with the Polisario. Especially La Guerra opposite Nouadhibou. They are also laying ambushes for our troops withdrawing from Mauritania. We are aware of this and will not be caught by surprise.

[Question] Would you be prepared to compromise and leave these Saharan villages to the Polisario since they are already there?

[Answer] Out of the question. The general staff is studying the problem. We intend to occupy those positions as all our Sahara. The only base they will have will be in their Algerian sector.

[Question] You are continually issuing threats such as: "Beware, we are going to exercise our right of pursuit, written orders have been given, next time we are attacked we will strike into Algeria..." These solemn threats which are never carried out are frankly becoming ridiculous.

[Answer] Originally we did not want to jeopardize the secret negotiations with Algeria. Then Boumediene fell ill and died. We have to await Chadli Bendjedid's appointment and his is supposed to have favorable intentions. His majesty does not want an escalation. He prefers to find some ground for understanding.

[Question] Can the Western Sahara be negotiated?

[Answer] People must realize that we are in the Sahara and will not leave.

[Question] Ought you not to realize that your adversaries also want something? That they will continue to harrass you? That your cumbersome army will tire before they do?

[Answer] His majesty is prepared to grant Algeria major concessions.

[Question] The Moroccan proposals did not interest the Algerians very much.

[Answer] If they persist in rejecting dialog they will be making a mistake for Morocco will be forced to reconsider the whole affair.

[Question] What does that mean?

[Answer] It means that we will have to make some calculations. Are 5 years of war of attrition more or less costly than a few days of all-out war? That is a calculation which must be made. They ought to make the same evaluation too and calculate what it will cost them.

[Question] Are you not rather presumptuous? And what if you were to lose the war after a few days of fighting? What if your territory were occupied

by Algeria? If your army were crushed? Would people as certain of their strength and of right being on their side as you are not then in a way find themselves on the brink of suicide?

[Answer] Morocco will make a decision only after insuring that it is likely to succeed. We have already shown that we are able to conceive, plan and successfully carry out an operation. Our "green march," which took place with banners flying in the name of the Koran, could be repeated even if different methods are used. A people's war could lead to many unforeseen events.

[Question] In your view, how good is the Algerian Army?

[Answer] It is overequipped.

[Question] This is no shortcoming. It has been said that it has three times as many aircraft and twice as many tanks as you. In a desert war this equipment would be of decisive importance.

[Answer] These figures are accurate. This is more or less the prevailing ratio. We believe, however, that the quality of their Soviet-made equipment is inferior to the Western materiel which we have (the opposite is true as far as light equipment is concerned). Above all, you must be able to use this equipment. It is difficult.

[Question] The Algerians are capable people. They have more graduates and engineers than you. They are the army technicians. You are running the risk of coming a cropper....

[Answer] We do not underestimate the enemy, but we also have confidence in our arms. However, the reason for fighting is the main thing. In our country, mothers would send their children into battle feeling sure that right is on their side. This does not apply to the other side. On the contrary, many Algerians realize that we have already ceded a large part of our Sahara to them. For them, war would be unjustified.

[Question] You Moroccans are so sure that you are right that you are unable to understand your adversary. If I were your neighbor I would feel apprehensive. Over a 3-year period you have twice extended your territory. And you have not even stated that you will not go any further. This is disturbing. Can you not understand this?

[Answer] Morocco is a country which is in the process of finalizing its decolonization. Our neighbors are aware of this. They only pretend that they cannot understand it. This is even more alarming, do you not think so? We helped--and how!--Algeria to achieve decolonization. We hope for Maghreb unity and this is what has happened.

21

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Question] Was this not unavoidable? Are two countries of similar strength not bound to be enemies?

[Answer] Why should lessons not be learned from the past? Why should we not avoid all that Europe had to suffer before it achieved a balance? This would be to everybody's advantage.

[Question] Would war not suit everybody, I mean all states, better? Look: Never before have you been so united in Morocco; your monarchy has never been stronger. Similarly, Algeria is trying to achieve national unity through hatred directed against Morocco. The possibility of war has enabled it to create a strong army. You are young countries. Perhaps you need this, perhaps you need to cut your teeth....

[Answer] What you are saying is true as far as Algeria is concerned since it has never been united as a state, but it does not apply to us. We are a very ancient nation, a very ancient state. We need no war to become Moroccans. We are Moroccans already. Please believe me.

[Question] The French people will never be able to understand that anyone should die for a desert which does not even conceal any treasure.

[Answer] Mont Blanc is more barren and desolate than the Sahara. Would you give it up?

COPYRIGHT: "le Nouvel Observateur"

CSO: 4400

END