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23 July 1980

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 26/80)



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OPRS L/9207

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING GOLAN FRONT TO PLO DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Mar 80 pp 22-23

[Article: "The Golan Heights: Pathway for the Palestinians Before the 1967 War"]

[Text] Has Damascus decided to open the Golan Front for the Palestine Resistance Movement? If so, why? If Syria has indeed made such a military decision, why was that decision made public? What will be the reaction of the Palestinians and the Lebanese to such a decision? What are the political implications of the decision?

In his book, "The Great Defeat," the late Mr Ahmad al-Shuqayri, discusses some of the secret events that directly preceded the June 1967 War, when he was still the chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. Al-Shuqayri relates his recollection of the series of meetings between him and a number of Syrian officials. Heading the list, are Dr Ibrahim Makhus and Maj Gen Ahmad Suwaydani, respectively Syria's foreign minister and chief of staff of the armed forces.

At that time, tension between Syria and Israel had reached the breaking point. Levi Eshkol's government was accusing Syria of encouraging Palestinian commando activity across the Golans and of provocative actions against Israeli border settlements and in the area around Lake Tiberias [Galilee]. Syria's response was that it was not responsible for reining in the Palestinians, coupled with a demand that the United Nations Truce Supervision Commission should expel the Israelis from the no-man's-zone separating the combatants into which the Israelis had infiltrated. Syria accused Israel, further, of illegally farming some parts of the no-man's-land and establishing fortifications in others.

The increasing tension gradually led to nearly daily land and air clashes, most notably the Israeli air attack on Syrian construction sites, where a Syrian project for diverting the course of a number of Jordan River tributaries was underway, and the April air battle which preceded the third Arab-Israeli war by 2 months.

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According to al-Shuqayri, Dr Makhus had this to tell him in a meeting between the two at the Foreign Ministry: "Thanks to God, all is going well. Commando activity is increasing daily. We shall continue to support it with men, money and arms. The important thing is to drag the Arab nations into the battle. It is not right that Syria should remain alone in the field." When al-Shuqayri suggested that Syria ought to coordinate things with the Unified Arab Command, then under Lt Gen 'Ali 'Amer, Dr Makhus reportedly remarked that 'Amur was senile, that he did not believe in a people's war, and, furthermore, that Syria was not prepared to take orders from him. According to al-Shuqayri's account of the meeting, Dr Makhus had added that Israel would not dare declare war then or soon thereafter. His reason: America would not permit it for fear of endangering its interests; and Russia would come to Syria's aid to maintain friendship between the two countries.

The war soon broke out and what happened is now history. Just over 3 years later, President Hafiz al-Assad's 1970 reform movement put an end to Salah Jadid's party leadership and removed Dr Makhus from the Foreign Ministry.

Prior to the 1973 Arab-Israeli [October] war, the Golan Heights witnessed a very small number of Palestinian guerrilla activities. A number of PLO organizations, however, maintained several bases behind the Syrian front lines.

After the war, and in accordance with the Golan disengagement agreement, a 5-kilometer wide neutral zone was established. The zone extending from the foot of Mt Harmon in the north to the Syrian-Jordanian-Palestinian border in the south was manned by a 1200 man United Nations force. This arrangement made it nearly impossible to carry out guerrilla activity in the area. Palestinian bases were restricted to the Syrian zone. Furthermore, Syria imposed restrictions on the movement of Palestinian guerillas on the Syrian side of neutral zone.

Today, in the midst of new developments on the international, Arab, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian scene, there is renewed talk of the Golan front. News agencies have attributed a statement to a Syrian official purporting that his government has given the Palestine Resistance permission to resume its operations in the Golan Heights, and that President al-Assad had informed guerrilla leaders that "the Golans were and continue to be open for commando activities against Israel." The reports add that President al-Assad had also indicated Syria's readiness to support and aid such operations.

Palestinian reaction in Beirut to these reports has been very reserved. There was, after all, no official Syrian announcement to that effect. It was not possible to verify the rumor attributed to the Syrian official by the media. Military decisions of this nature are highly important and kept secret. Palestinian resistance circles were reluctant to discuss the matter.

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In view of the fact that such a decision is ultimately a Syrian-Palestinian concern, Palestinian caution and reluctance to discuss the matter is understandable. Decisions of this nature are made on the highest level and kept secret.

Political observers here showed a great deal of interest in what the media had reported from Damascus. Should the report be true, it would represent an important turning point in the Syrian strategy, one that sooner or later could spell the difference between peace and war in the region. Its direct consequences would be felt in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Israel, and possibly, Jordan.

Observers here are certain that President al-Assad would be the first to recognize these implications. He is known as a careful planner. Furthermore, the Palestinian resistance, which has consistently demanded that all barriers to its freedom of action imposed by Arab countries be removed, undoubtedly understands the implications of such a turning point in the Syrian strategy.

Based on this analysis, observers in Beirut are convinced that the Palestinians will not take the rumored report seriously unless they can verify it. If the report proves to be true, then they would want to know how the new decision is to be implemented and what measures the Syrians would take to facilitate Palestinian commando activity. They would want to discuss with Damascus the possible reaction in Israel, the Arab world, and on the international scene to a resumption of guerrilla activity in the Golans.

Observers inclined to believe the report wonder whether Syria's decision would extend to Lebanese territory under Syria's military control. In particular, they wonder whether the Palestinians would be permitted to use the Baqa'a region, which leads directly or indirectly to the Israeli-occupied territory in the Golans and upper Galilee. Another point of interest is whether Syria would facilitate the passage of guerrillas across its neighboring Jordanian border.

At any rate, observers in Beirut feel that, should the rumored report be true, then it had come at a moment when European diplomatic and political activity on the Middle East issue is at its apex. There is little doubt that the intense diplomatic activity in Europe at this time is attracting a good deal of Palestinian interest.

Political observers in Beirut are also wondering whether Syria's goal is to nip in the bud any new [Middle East] initiative. Has Syria, they ask, decided to embark on a new strategy similar to that of Salah Jadid's government [1965-1970], based on waging a people's war of liberation against Israel and the United States, and premised on assistance from the Soviet Union and on dragging the Arab nations into the fray? Is

Syria returning to the pre-1967 War strategy described by Dr Makhus in his meeting with al-Shuqayri?

"Lebanese Front" sources opposed to the Assad Government insist that there has been no change in the Syrian president's strategy. They claim that opening up the Golans for guerrilla operations is a ploy to divert attention from the worsening internal situation in Syria. They cite recent Syrian incidents to support their claim. The same circles insist that Damascus has no other option, especially if Carter were to succeed in convincing Israel to make some concessions to Egypt in the [Palestinian] autonomy negotiations before the expiration date of 26 May established by the Camp David accords.

One other question remains: What happens should the limited war of attrition explode into a full blown war between Israel and Syria?

The predominant feeling in the Lebanese circles is that internal developments in Syria will influence to a great extent the next moves of the Arabs and the Israelis. The best way to describe the present situation is to characterize it as a wait-and-see attitude.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ARABS SAID TO BE FULLY ACTIVE IN ARMAMENTS RACE

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Mar 80 pp 40-42

[Article: "The Middle East: 66 Divisions, 15,000 Tanks, 3,000 Planes"]

[Text] While the Arabs and Israel are engaged in an open arms race in the Middle East, there is a second, clandestine, but equally contested race among the major powers over the billion-dollar contracts for the sale of arms and military equipment. The region has been transformed into a field bristling with armies, arms and equipment, with a power punch rivaling that of NATO.

1980 will be the "year of the gun." This is the unanimous view of strategic and arms experts who keep tabs on arms exports, particularly to the world's tense and troubled regions.

As an example, preliminary studies show that, as a result of the Afghan and Iranian crises, as well as other entanglements in the Middle East and Africa, American arms exports in 1980 will reach nearly \$25 billion, exclusive of spare parts, training and maintenance contracts, which, at the very least, will triple the original sales figure.

The preceding estimate does not include sales to China, which has been recently permitted to purchase a variety of American arms, equipment and aircraft. The vast Chinese market will provide an additional, unprecedented opportunity for American and European arms sales.

Commenting on these developments, Wolfgang Malman, director of the Stockholm based International Arms Research Institute, says that indications that the major powers would exercise self-control in their arms sales policies have all but disappeared. In the wake of the Afghan crisis, he claims, all efforts to solve problems by negotiations have collapsed, making 1980 an ominous year, and signalling the beginning of an extremely dangerous era, an era of conflict among the major powers over the earth's natural resources, advanced behind a veil of doctrinal and ideological disputes.

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A recent report from the Institute for Strategic Studies had this to say about military balance in the Middle East in 1979-1980:

There has been a major increase in the number of heavy armaments in the Arab world and Israel during the past decade. The region has 66 divisions, an increase of 60 percent; the number of military aircraft of all sizes and capabilities has risen to 3,066, an increase of 61 percent over the corresponding figure of 10 years ago.

The report goes on: The danger of the Middle East arsenal lies in the fact that it is not a temporary phenomenon, but a long-range affair. This conclusion is inescapable when one contrasts the Middle East and NATO arsenals. NATO, with 75 divisions, has only 9 divisions more than the Middle East nations combined. In tanks, NATO falls short by 175. NATO's 2,450 aircraft fall short by nearly 616 from the number fielded by the Middle East nations.

The report pays special attention to Iraq's military forces. Iraq, according to the report, has 12 divisions, 2,200 tanks, and 450 modern aircraft, giving it a clear numerical superiority over any other country in the region.

The preceding figures perhaps provide the best explanation for America's aggressive and rabid attempt to prevent the transfer of nuclear technology to and the development of nuclear research in Iraq, and this despite the fact that Iraq was one of the signatories of the 1968 Nuclear Arms Nonproliferation Treaty and has agreed to open its nuclear research center to inspection by the Vienna-based Nuclear Energy Agency.

The American campaign against Iraq's program of using nuclear technology to generate electric power stands in vivid contrast to the protective attitude assumed toward Israel, which opposes international inspection of its nuclear facilities, and which actively produces nuclear weapons at its Dimona Research Center.

The United States worked feverishly to cover up the experimental nuclear explosion jointly conducted by Israel and South Africa in the South Pole region a few months ago. Similarly, the United States worked hard to cover up the theft of nuclear fuel by Israeli agents from a large number of American nuclear research facilities. The stolen fuel was exported to Israel.

Commenting on the anti-Iraq American campaign, the FINANCIAL TIMES [of London] said that British nuclear scientists doubted that the equipment supplied to Iraq by Italy could be used to produce nuclear weapons. This reaction was prompted by American claims that the Italian equipment could be used to produce plutonium, a fissionable material to fuel atomic bombs. The American furor over the export of Italian "hot cells" was a scare

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tactic to prevent the transfer of nuclear technology to the Arab world. The "hot cell" is in fact a protective shield necessary in all research involving radioactive substances. It is, consequently, a primary component for the Iraqi nuclear research program.

At any rate, the open and often secret American pressure campaign to handicap the development of the Iraqi nuclear research program has failed. Iraq has recently obtained a sizeable shipment of 90 percent enriched uranium from France, whose government is convinced that the uranium would not be used for atomic weapons production. Informed sources have disclosed that the American scare campaign against the Iraqi-Italian deal has been fostered by Zionist groups, whose goal is to prevent the U.S. Defense and State departments from selling to Italy a number of electric motors and generators to power four naval vessels destined for Iraq. It is well known that the nuclear research equipment deal between Italy and Iraq is the result of a 4-year old agreement for scientific cooperation, including the nuclear field. The agreement is similar to one concluded earlier between France and Iraq.

The American campaign indicates that nuclear research equipment has now been added to the list of export armaments. The overriding American concern, however, is to limit the export of nuclear technology to countries in the American orbit, with particular emphasis on protecting Israel from the possible consequences of letting the technology reach any Islamic or Arab hands.

Behind all this is an important development in the armaments trade business: the American armaments industry has regained control of the U.S. Government. What gives credence to this view is that the weapons trade has become an essential and unprecedented component of American foreign policy. When Carter won the presidency he declared--on religious grounds--that he would limit American weapons exports, particularly to [politically] tense regions. He did, for example, stop the sale to Bahrain of F-5 airplanes and Hughes antitank missiles. Furthermore, Mr Carter canceled a deal to supply Pakistan with A-7 attack planes as well as Textron-made Bell helicopters. The weapons deals ordered canceled by Mr Carter in 1978 had a value in excess of one billion dollars. Most of them were destined for Africa and the Arab countries. This American restraint, however, revitalized the European weapons market which was capable of offering substitutes to anyone able to pay.

The deterioration of Soviet-American relations following the Iranian crisis made the weapons trade a fundamental element in America's foreign policy, reopening the way wide open for a resumption of the arms race and for unrestricted weapons exports either through direct sales or through strategic military aid agreements similar to those between the U.S. on the one hand and Egypt and Israel on the other.

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The weapons export race centers chiefly on the sale of fighter and bomber aircraft by the U.S., the USSR and France. The race is made all the more spirited by studies indicating that the international market can absorb in the next decade nearly 5,000 more airplanes valued at more than \$50 billion. This enormous amount of money gives an idea of how fierce the competition will be among the airplane manufacturers which include the U.S., the Soviet Union, France, Italy, Britain, and, to some extent, West Germany. Since France has entered the market in a big way, the competition will not center chiefly on the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

In view of the expected 3-nation competition, three American companies are now engaged in a race for producing tomorrow's most advanced fighter plane. These are Northrup with its F-18L, McDonald Douglas with its F-18A, and General Dynamics with its F-16. As of now, General Dynamics appears to be the winner, with preliminary sales orders of nearly \$10 billion over the next 5 years from Spain, Canada, Australia, Israel and Egypt.

To the extent that Northrup Corporation has been most responsive to the requirements of the U.S. military aid program by reducing the effectiveness of its export warplanes, it has won President Carter's approval for developing the F-X, a warplane of limited capability to replace the F-5, which is often referred to as "the poor nations' warplane." As of last year, Northrup has sold approximately 3,500 F-5's through direct sales or through the U.S. military aid program. This figure represents one-half of Northrup's sales during the past decade. Last year alone, Northrup's sales were \$1.60 billion compared with Lockheed's \$1.40 billion, McDonald Douglas' \$638 million, and General Dynamics' \$918 million.

Tanks and armored vehicles come next in the fierce international arms trade. Among the Western manufacturers the competition has been narrowed down to a contest between Chrysler's X-M1, now under development, and the German-French tank being developed to replace the German Leopard 2 and the French M-X30. In a bid to promote the sale of their jointly-developed tank, Germany and France have ordered 2,000 tanks each.

The jointly-developed German-French tank is equipped with laser devices, an infrared optical system to improve night vision, and a special computer to direct its missiles and artillery fire. It is being jointly produced by the Grossmaffel Company, the largest German manufacturer of armored vehicles, Maschinenfabrik, a subsidiary of Krupp, and Giat, France's largest organization for the production of armaments.

To the extent that fixed and movable missiles have become an essential component of tank warfare and modern air defense systems, Germany and France have agreed to develop jointly a new generation of Milan, Haute, and Roland missiles. The two companies involved in this project are Messerschmitt of Germany and Aerospecial of France, the latter of which sold \$690 million worth of missiles last year alone.

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In the Arab world, the sale of French missiles, especially of the Crotale and modified Shahin variety, has increased significantly.

American manufacturers are anxious about the growing French competition. They claim that one of the chief reasons for President Giscard d'Estaing's recent tour of the Arab world was to promote the sale of French armaments, especially warplanes. Based on reports from American sources, \$10 billion worth of French warplanes will be sold to the Arab world by 1985 under the terms of existing contracts and others under negotiations. The deal is expected to enhance the competitive edge of Dassault-Breguet, the French plane manufacturer.

Weapons experts claim that France exported nearly \$6.10 billion worth of armaments in 1979, approximately one-half the amount exported by the United States. This, they point out, makes France the third largest arms supplier after the United States and the Soviet Union. Italy, following the recently concluded contracts with Iraq and a few other Arab countries, is expected to move up to fourth place, pushing Britain to fifth place.

According to published reports, France produces 3 times as many warplanes as it purchases for its armed forces. Revenue from the sale of warplanes reportedly covered approximately 20 percent of France's expenditures for imported oil in 1979. Furthermore, statistical reports indicate that the Dassault Company has Arab orders for 450 Mirage-2000 planes worth \$6 billion. The planes will go primarily to Iraq, followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It is reported that Abu Dhabi has also decided to order French warplanes, following President d'Estaing's recent visit to that country.

There are additional unconfirmed reports that Saudi Arabia is negotiating the purchase of 150 more Mirage-2000 planes to be distributed among Pakistan, Morocco, and Jordan. The cost of each 100 planes is reportedly \$2.4 billion.

Experts expect Arab demand for Mirage planes to continue growing through 1985. The heavy demand reportedly may lead to Arab participation in projects to develop a future generation of Mirage planes. There are reports that certain Arab quarters are negotiating with Dassault for participation in the development of the Mirage-4000, a plane slated for export. Dassault has reportedly spent \$700 million on the development of a prototype, but needs an additional \$1.5 billion to finance large-scale production.

Other countries are beginning to enter the armaments field. Among these is Brazil, which last year accounted for \$800 million in exports. Brazil has successfully marketed its tank, the Caseavel, which is noted for its speed and ability to operate in rough and desert terrain. Brazil is particularly interested in the Arab market.

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Israel is another newcomer into the armament business. Its joint production agreements, both public and secret, with American companies, and with the approval of the U.S. State Department, are cause for concern in the Arab world. Last year alone, Israel exported nearly \$1 billion worth of military equipment mostly to South Africa, Kenya, and some Latin American countries. There are indications that Israel has reached an agreement with the United States for the production of the Lafi (Lion) plane. The plane will be powered by the General Electric F-44 engine, the same one used on American F-18 planes.

The most ominous development, however, is the current effort by the American armaments industry to establish a joint Egyptian-Israeli weapons industry under American control. Toward this end, Egypt's defense minister visited Israel 2 months ago to discuss the possibility of a joint enterprise for the production of helicopters, in cooperation with some British companies.

It is also expected that Japan may soon join the armaments trade competition. In view of the Japanese Government's ban on the production of arms for export and the limitation of that country's armament industry to supply the needs of its defense forces only, Japanese arms remain costly and noncompetitive. The potential developments of the current confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, however, are beginning to change the picture. Washington is pressing Tokyo to resume unrestricted armament production, and to build 4 aircraft carriers before 1985, something from which Japan was prohibited by the [World War II] peace agreement. Should Japan resume large-scale armament production, it will resort to exports to cover part of the cost. The first Japanese military export is likely to be the Mitsu-Bishi-74 tank, which is noted for its innovations.

In light of these disturbing developments in the armaments business, the strategic "Crescent of Crisis," extending from Morocco, across North Africa, the Middle East, the Gulf region, Pakistan, India to Southeast Asia, will continue, for the foreseeable future, to be the major marketplace for international armaments.

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BASIS, OPERATION OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL DISCUSSED

Paris: AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 2 May 80 pp 22-23

[Article: "On the Occasion of the 15th Session of the National Council: Members of Palestinian Parliament Are Not Elected, but Democracy Is Basis of Dialogue and Decision-Making"]

[Text] The time for the next session of the Palestinian parliament (the National Council) has not yet been precisely determined, and it is not known whether the council will be convened in Damascus or in Beirut. At any rate AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI reviews below the most important achievements of the Palestinian parliament since it was formed.

As this 15th session of the Palestinian National Council gets under way, 16 years will have elapsed since the establishment of the PLO. During these years the council convened 15 regular sessions and 2 emergency sessions. The Arab League in Cairo hosted all these sessions except the first one, which was held in Jerusalem; the third, which was held in Ghaza; an emergency session in Amman; and the 14th session which was held in Damascus.

The Palestinian National Council is in fact the parliament of the Palestinian people and the body which represents their various fundamental sectors, their political parties and their popular, professional and guerilla organizations. Therefore, the council does exemplify the supreme authority among the establishments of the PLO, and it is responsible for drawing up the PLO's general policy, its plans and its programs.

Although the by-laws of the organization stipulate that council members be chosen in general elections, the overpowering circumstances under which the people of Palestine are living have prevented this so far. Suffice it to point out that half of these people are living under the control of Zionist occupation and the other half are dispersed and living in more than one country.

It is worth noting here that all the members who represent professional and popular organizations are elected in the context of these organizations.

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It may, therefore, be said that this council is considered the body that exemplifies Palestinian national unity. It includes all the powers and the persons who are qualified to express the will of the people of Palestine. After 16 years, and this is how old the organization is, the council's experience provides material evidence of the seriousness and the depth of democratic practices within the council.

But it is the first session of the National Council, which was held in Jerusalem between 28/5/1964 and 2/6/1964, that remains one of the council's most important sessions. It was the session which proclaimed the establishment of the PLO, after the National Palestinian Charter was adopted. It proclaimed the by-laws of the organization, and the by-laws of the Palestinian National Fund. It was the session which undertook [to oversee] the opening of training camps and the formation of regular military militias as a nucleus for what later became the Palestinian Liberation Army.

Accomplishing all this was no easy matter if we recall that the people of Palestine had spent about 16 years in a miserable state of loss and fragmentation; they had been without leadership and without role models. We also have to remember the conflicting positions of the Arab countries on the question of reorganizing the Palestinian people and stirring up their national and political existence.

During its first session, however, the National Council was able to benefit from the revolutionary movement in popular Palestinian circles and from the onset of the secret movement for armed struggle and guerilla activity. Although some Arabs or Palestinians tended to view the organization in this stage as a possible vehicle for containing and controlling Palestinian rebellion, others saw in the organization a possible vehicle for exploding this rebellion and turning it into a continuing revolution that would be governed by the laws of struggle and will power.

Therefore, the National Council reflected these two contradictory trends for a period that extended until 1967 and the June War which occurred that year. This war altered the course of the area, and its effects are still quite distinct today.

During its second session which was held in Cairo from 31/5/1965 to 4/6/1965 the National Council experienced the distinct activities of the various Palestinian organizations despite the fact that the representation of these organizations in the council was small. We must remember that this session was convened only a few months after Fatah was established and after its first military initiative. There was a vicious struggle between supporters of these organizations and those who were expressing their fears of the consequences of a unilateral armed struggle that was not coordinated with the Arabs and with the common Arab defense strategy.

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This session ended with the adoption of a popular organization law and with a request that the task of the liberation army in choosing and transferring officers be made easier; that military conscription be imposed on all Palestinians; and that attention to the irregular guerilla forces be increased.

In addition to the fact that the leadership of the organization, which was headed by the late Ahmad al-Shuqayri, was suffering on the Palestinian scene, this leadership was engaged in a number of conflicts and battles on the Arab scene, and especially with Jordan and Tunisia, between the second and the third session. This third session was held in the city of Ghaza between 20/5/1966 and 24/5/1966.

At that time the Arab situation in general was moving away from the spirit of the summit which had begun in 1963. The Arab Solidarity Treaty had collapsed, and the fourth Summit Conference which was to have been held in September 1966 was not convened. Egyptian-Saudi relations deteriorated, and the policy of alliances between what was called revolutionary regimes and conservative regimes was expanded. There was almost a total blackout on guerilla activity, and there was collective pursuits of those who were working under that banner.

Therefore, the resolutions of the third session of the National Council were inspired by this general political scene: they affirmed the freedom of Palestinian action, the unity of Palestinian revolutionary action; and the unity of Arab action. These resolutions also called for the necessity of preparing for battle; using oil as a political weapon; and facilitating the mission of the liberation army. They also called upon the Arab countries to fulfill their financial obligations towards the Palestinian people.

But these resolutions failed to accomplish what they were adopted to confront, and the crisis between the PLO and the Jordanian government persisted. It reached its peak when the Jordanian authorities closed and sealed the offices of the organization in Jerusalem. The Jordanian government then withdrew its recognition of the organization in a memorandum it submitted to the Arab League. President 'Abd-al-Nasir was then able to restore relations between Jordan and al-Shuqayri 5 days before the June War.

On the local scene, likewise, relations between al-Shuqayri and the guerilla organizations deteriorated, just as they deteriorated between him and many of those who were working with him in the organization. This forced him to make more unilateral decisions and to go beyond his constitutional authority, and this finally led to his resignation on 24/12/1967.

Thus began a new stage in the life of the organization. Mr Yahya Hammudah became the acting chairman until a new National Council was to be convened.

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This council would represent the will of the people in the light of the new factors that were created by the June War.

This was not an easy task. Negotiations between all the Palestinian parties that are concerned with the matter went on for approximately 7 months until an agreement was reached on the format of the new council.

The new National Council, which was made up of 100 members, was convened in Cairo. In its fourth session it adopted a group of extremely important resolutions that reflected to a large extent its new structure. Organizations acquired 68 seats; the unions acquired 3; and the independents acquired 29 seats. This took place between 10/7/1968 and 17/7/1968.

One of the most important accomplishments of this session was the fact that the chairmanship of the National Council was separated from the chairmanship of the Executive Committee. In other words, the legislative authority was separated from the executive authority. The council also approved an amendment to the National Charter so as to make it consistent with the requirements of the stage. The by-laws of the organization were also amended so as to give the council [the authority] to select the Executive Committee and to give or deny it confidence. Other changes that were necessary were also made.

In spite of this qualitative leap in the resolutions that were issued by this fourth session, the problem of national unity remained difficult. The problem of duplication between the PLO and all the guerilla organizations also remained [to be solved] despite the differences that existed among the latter.

These problems had to wait until the fifth session of the National Council convened in Cairo from 1/2/1969 to 4/2/1969 where the basic change in the makeup of the organization took place. A new executive committee was elected; it included representatives from Fatah, al-Sa'iqah and the independents. Yasir 'Arafat was one of the members who was elected to the Executive Committee. He later became chairman of the Executive Committee, and he continues [in this position] until today.

In its final communique the council announced that it had achieved a basic, alliance step on the road towards building national unity in combat. This later came to be known as the leadership of the Palestinian armed struggle. The communique called upon all the organizations to rally around the Liberation Organization.

Politically speaking, one of the most prominent and the most significant resolutions that came out of this session was the council's condemnation of Security Council Resolution 242 and its proclamation that it would struggle "to establish a democratic society in Palestine that would include all Palestinians: Moslems, Christians and Jews."

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There were some organizational developments after the fourth and the fifth sessions. The most important of these was the birth of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The national leadership of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in Iraq announced the formation of the Arab Liberation Front on 10/4/1969. The Popular Front--the general leadership--had split from the PFLP late in 1968, and the Arab Organization of Palestine had also split in the same year. On 23/5/1969 the National Struggle Front split from Fatah after it had worked with it for about a year. However, all these organizations began to notice the importance of the PLO as the qualified framework for achieving national unity. It was this realization that made the sixth session less violent than the sessions which preceded it.

It was also in Cairo that the sixth session of the National Council was convened between 1/9/1969 and 6/9/1969. The crisis of relations between the resistance and the Lebanese government dominated the agenda of this session. There was a lengthy discussion about turning the eastern front into a Hanoi for the resistance. At that time the war of attrition was flaring up on the Egyptian front. The final communique of this session stated that "the Palestinian people are determined to continue their revolution until victory is achieved and a democratic state that would be removed from all forms of religious and racial discrimination is established."

When the council adjourned, its members had no knowledge of the surprises the following year would have in store. Circumstances decreed that Jordan be the scene of these surprises. The seventh session of the council was convened between 30/5/1970 and 4/6/1970 as disputes on the Jordanian scene escalated. The formation of a central committee was approved, and the military solution, achieved by means of a popular war of liberation, was considered to be the only solution to the Arab-Zionist struggle. The council rejected all peaceful solutions and affirmed the solidarity of the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples.

But conditions soon became tense very quickly, and especially after Egypt and Jordan accepted William Rogers' initiative. This required that an emergency session of the council be convened, and the council met in Amman on 27/8/1970.

The most important proclamation made by the National Council during that session was that which regarded the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the people of Palestine on the basis of the organization's natural right of being the revolutionary body which expresses the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people for the full liberation of Palestine.

The eighth regular session of the National Council, and the first that was held after the events of September 1970 in Jordan, was convened in a climate that was naturally filled with different opinions, trends and

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positions. Everybody was in a state of confusion and felt torn. It was said then that the National Council had never seen a session where so many maneuvering was going on. Council members who were outside the conference hall outnumbered those inside. Their talks centered around how a minimum of results can be achieved.

During this eighth session the council adopted a political action program on the Palestinian, the Jordanian, the Arab and the world scenes in the context of the National Charter. This program was adopted as a guide for action in the coming stage. The council also decided to form a new National Council that would be made up of 150 members. Then the council charged the leaders to continue their work until the [new] council, which was approved by the current council, is formed by a committee which is to include the Executive Committee, the chairman of the National Council, the commander of the liberation army and those members of the National Council whom the Executive Committee wishes to add.

The new council was formed, and it convened its ninth session in Cairo between 7/7/1971 and 13/7/1971. The council came close to suspending its agenda because conditions between Jordan and the resistance had worsened in the jungles of Jarash and 'Ajlun. Events continued without interruption, and Jordan announced the plan for a United Arab Kingdom. This required that an emergency session be convened--that was the 10th session. This 10th session coincided with a popular convention that was held between 6 and 12 April 1972.

During that session the council approved the recommendations of the National Unity Committee, and it approved the expansion of the National Council so that 50 percent of the new members would be from the unions. A preparatory committee made up of the chairman of the council and the Executive Committee was charged with the task of [carrying out] this expansion.

But the resolutions of the 11th session of the National Council, which was convened between 16 and 12/1/1973 [sic] were overshadowed by the October War, which took place months later, and by the Security Council Resolution, which this time bore the number 338. Arab diplomacy, and especially Egyptian diplomacy began to work more actively for a peace conference and for establishing a comprehensive and a final settlement for the question of the Middle East.

It was in this general framework that the 12th session of the National Council was convened between 1/5/1974 and 8/6/1974. The council unanimously approved the political communique that was known as the 10-Point Program. This happened at a time when foreign correspondents were betting that the council would break up from the inside and that the Palestinian rank would be split forever.

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It is true that the formulation of these points was the product of Palestinian intelligence for a simultaneous "retrogression" and "a non-response" to the new challenges [on the scene] while waiting for the general political picture to be completed.

One of the most important points that attracted attention in these 10 points was the text of the second article which pertained to "establishing a national government on any part of Palestinian territory that is liberated." To put it more clearly, this meant that there was a willingness to accept a Palestinian state over part of Palestinian soil.

After an executive committee of 14 members was elected, the council decided, because the end of its term was approaching, to form a preparatory committee from the chairman's office and from the Executive Committee. This preparatory committee would form a new council that would take into account the relationship of confrontation between the groups of the revolution. The existing council had assumed its responsibilities on 7/7/1971, and [its term] was supposed to expire on 7/7/1974.

The 13th session, which was called the session of the martyr Kamal Jumblatt and was convened in mid March of 1976, was concerned, as its name suggests, with the consequences of the painful Lebanese events and with the new pan-Arab and international burdens which befell the struggle of the Palestinian people. The council issued a political statement that included the following points among others:

1. An emphasis on the fact that the question of Palestine was the core and the basis of the Arab-Zionist struggle and on the fact that Security Council Resolution 242 ignored the people of Palestine and their rights. Therefore, the council was rejecting this resolution.
2. An emphasis on the fact that the armed struggle and the complementary political and popular struggle that would accompany it will be continued so that the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine which cannot be disposed of can be achieved.
3. All forms of capitulatory U.S. settlements are to be rejected; any settlement that would be achieved at the expense of the rights of the people of Palestine is to be opposed so it can be scuttled; and the Arab nation is to be called upon to bear its pan-Arab responsibilities.
4. The council expressed its concern for the right of the Palestinian Revolution to exist in Lebanon in the context of the Cairo Agreement. The council commended the people of Lebanon, and the PLO expressed its concern for the unity of the soil and the people of Lebanon as well as for their security, their independence and their Arab character.

There are other resolutions but the most important item that attracts one's attention here is the diplomatic language which was adopted by

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the political communique and which was consistent with the international diplomatic directions for solving the problem in the context of the United Nations. At the end of this session a secondary change was made in the membership of the Executive Committee.

After the session of the martyr Kamal Jumblatt, the Houari Boumedienne session was convened in January 1979 in Damascus. This was a stormy and a passionate session despite urgent pleas for achieving full national unity. The council had in fact approved a set of recommendations in this regard on the political and organizational levels. But the climate of the council and the fact that conditions in Lebanon were becoming critical prevented the session from continuing along the lines that had been hoped for it. The council was adjourned after the term of the Executive Committee was extended without making any changes in the committee. The committee promised that it would convene a session as soon as possible. And this was the case. And hence comes the call for the 15th session which is supposed to convene soon in Damascus or in Beirut.

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AFGHANISTAN

AFGHAN CRISIS ANALYZED IN 'GOD, THE GOLD AND THE BLOOD'

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 30 May 80 pp 85-90

[Chapter by Jean Larteguy from his book "God, the Gold and the Blood," published by Presses de la Cite (City Press)]

[Text] The coup in Kabul has often been represented as a stage in a vast Soviet plan to push toward the warm seas and the Persian Gulf (Peter the Great thought of it first). What Jean Larteguy reveals in one of the chapters in his book "God, the Gold and the Blood" (City Press), which we are reprinting here, proves that in reality the Red Army, maddened by the massacre of its advisers, committed its troops in Afghanistan to force the hand of Brezhnev, in a way. Moral: that there is a Russian plan for expansion toward the south is entirely certain. That the Kabul coup did not occur under the conditions and at the date planned is certain as well.

I did not know Afghanistan. I had only crossed it a very long time before. I remember a frontier post with a cluster of trucks, caravans of hairy camels, thin faces, bushy beards, suspicious customs agents for whose approving whim one must wait indefinitely, and then a desert swept by winds which raised an ochre dust. This was, I was told, the "120-day wind."

The British embassy was celebrating the first year in which no diplomat had been assassinated.

With nostalgia for the Khyber Pass of the "Three Bengal Lancers," and Kipling's novels, a few elderly gentlemen toasted these memories. And packed their bags.

With India independent now, England no longer had any interest in remaining in this borderland of an empire which had ceased to exist.

"The Russians will replace us," one of them said. "They have been dying to do so for so long. I wish them joy of it. In this damnable country there

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is nothing to be gained but blows. Whatever we said, whatever we did, we remained Kafirs, infidels. The Afghans cannot reach agreement among themselves except at our expense, and they do not know where their frontiers are. These vagabonds who think they are the only true Moslems in Islam are prouder than the Spanish nobles. They push the sense of honor and the cult of virility to the point of madness. Isolated for centuries in their mountain citadels, or wandering the icy steppes, they are still living in the Middle Ages. Yes indeed, I wish them joy of the Russians. And that they may lose as many feathers as we did."

A Rolls Royce and Bandits on Horseback

Helene Carrere d'Encausse told me:

"When the Russians speak of peace, it is not only a propaganda theme, for peace is a magic word linked with the oldest traditions. Russia is a land of invasions. The Russians are not invaders but the victims of invasions. I believe in the weight of history, whatever the regime may be." And when I interjected "But what about Afghanistan?" she answered: "Afghanistan has traditionally been a part of the Russian sphere of interest, and already in the days of the czars there was conflict with the British. This is an historic terrain for Russian deployment, and thus a phenomenon requiring separate analysis. Afghanistan has a common frontier with Russia and is a part of the area it defends."

Unfortunately, by the same token as Afghanistan, Iran too is a part of this "deployment terrain."

The British have suffered many setbacks in Afghanistan. In 1840, in the time of Queen Victoria, when the sun never set on her empire, an army of 23,000 British and Indians was totally destroyed there. There was only one survivor, the surgeon Brydon, who managed to reach the British fort in Djelalabad, his strength exhausted, to report the disaster. All had perished: men, women and children.

At that time the Russians controlled the North, all of Central Asia. The British established themselves in Peshawar and Afghanistan was abandoned to its internal quarrels. The terrible emir Abdurrahman made order prevail there in his own fashion. He had bandits hung along the roads in iron cages where they slowly starved or froze to death.

His successor, known as a bad Moslem, was assassinated. Amanullah, who came next, undertook to open up his country to progress. Mistrusting both the British and the Russians, he turned to the French and the Germans.

Won over to the mania for progress, like the Iranian Reza Khan, he hastened Westernization measures . . . and quadrupled taxes.

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At odds with the tribes and the all-powerful mullahs, Amanullah had to flee in his beautiful Rolls Royce, pursued by the horsemen of Batch-Sakao, a bandit and son of a water carrier who proclaimed himself king.

Nadir, one of Amanullah's cousins, took Kabul with the aid of tribes to which he had made wild promises. He had Batch-Sakao shot and became shah. He was to be assassinated.

Zahir Shah, his son, succeeded him. He was a cautious and efficient man who turned the power over to his uncle, and then to his cousin and brother-in-law, Prince Daud.

Daud, on bad terms with Pakistan, with which the United States was allied, established links with the USSR and in 1955 he welcomed Khrushchev to Kabul. The Russians spread out through the country, building roads and even mosques, but they compensated themselves by claiming rights to all the gas deposits in Afghan Turkestan.

Worried about the ever-greater dependence of Afghanistan on the USSR, King Zahir emerged from his passivity, ousted Daud and took the government in hand. He effected a reconciliation with Pakistan and the United States and then, in the midst of a famine, went to take the waters at a spa in Italy.

Aided by the army headed by Soviet advisers, Prince Daud overthrew the regime and seized power. This was to be the end of Western and American influence. It had lasted 10 years.

A General's Body Mutilated by Machine-Gun Fire

Daud proclaimed a republic. His fate was to be massacre, along with 1,200 members of his powerful family, for daring to make contact with the West to avoid being left alone against the Russians. There was little talk of it in the West. A mere palace revolution!

A proverb which might be Afghan says that if one is to dine with the devil, he should have a long spoon. Daud's was not long enough.

Afghanistan has 10 to 12 million inhabitants, of whom 2 million are nomads. They are Tadzhiks, Pashtuns and Hazaras, the descendants of the hordes of Genghis Khan. The terrain is extremely rugged and lends itself to ambush.

On 25 December 1979, in the uncomfortable old palace of the old kings of Afghanistan, now a fortress on the outskirts of Kabul, a high-ranking Soviet minister and general, Vi,tor Paputin, was shot dead in the middle of the night. His body was cut in two by a burst from a Kalashnikov weapon in the hands of one of the bodyguards of Hafizullah Amin, head of the popular republic and secretary general of the Afghan Communist Party.

For 10 years Afghanistan had been in the Soviet sphere. Iran would soon be incorporated if patience could be exercised, and it would be. Saudi Arabia, the emirates on the Gulf and their riches were within reach. Their deposits could be sabotaged at any time by the People's Liberation Front headed by Georges Habache, who was controlled by the KGB.

On the other side of the world, armed, equipped and advised by the Red Army, Vietnam digested its conquests--Laos and Kampuchea. Despite Chinese warnings, pro-Vietnamese guerrilla fighters were infiltrating Thailand.

The missiles and armored divisions of the Warsaw Pact had Europe by the throat, a Europe already threatened in Africa where it was in danger of seeing its supplies of raw materials cut off, and in the Middle East where its oil was threatened. Missile-launching cruisers, Russian nuclear submarines and spy planes, from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, like a vast game of prisoner's base, in which each vessel of the United States and its allies was marked. The Kremlin diplomats were speaking out loudly. The chiefs of aligned communist parties, like Marchais, adopted the mannerisms of gauleiters. President Carter was suffering the pangs of his good conscience, and electoral problems. In Tehran, a gang of pseudostudents, as a condition for the release of the hostages they held, demanded that he beat his breast and admit his crimes. They all but asked that he present himself to them, neck bared and the rope around his neck, like the bourgeois of Calais, of whose sad fate they were fortunately ignorant.

Crowded Prisons Emptied at Night

PRAVDA lectured him like a naive and bumbling child. After his ears had been properly boxed, detente and the signing of the SALT II agreement, which would serve Soviet interests above all, were dangled before him as a lure. But he was forbidden to give NATO the medium-range Pershing missiles abundantly available to the troops of the Warsaw Pact.

Worried and in the midst of an economic crisis, free Europe was ready for any sacrifice, any concession if only it could be guaranteed, promised some years of peace. The only politician who showed evidence of character was a woman, Mrs Thatcher, who wondered if it was not in England's interests to keep its distance from a fragmented, hesitant Europe uncertain in its diplomacy, and to remain an island under the American umbrella.

The fluctuating policy of Giscard d'Estaing reflected his electoral concerns.

Overnight, because of the damnable Afghans and their intractable nature, the conqueror was to find himself in the position of a supplicant. His formidable army caught in a hornets' nest, Brezhnev sought the understanding of Carter and asked the Europeans to persuade the American president of his good faith and his peaceful intentions. This was no longer the America of Watergate. The slap dealt in Tehran caused it to forget its Vietnam complex.

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The leaders in Hanoi, thanks to their pride, their blunderings, their contempt for the rights of peoples, their savage triumphs and their death camps, had contributed greatly to this healing. After the assassination of Daud and the massacre of his family, the Russians had installed in power a sectarian and narrow-minded teacher, Taraki, a true Marxist-Leninist trained in the cadre schools of the party.

He was the secretary general of one of the two rump communist parties, the Parcham, and he was controlled through his rival, Hafizullah Amin, who was the motive force of the Khalq. The Soviet spiritual fathers of these parties were not unaware that Afghan nationalism could at any time prevail over the deepest Marxist faith, and that it was wise to take precautions. Taraki no longer knew anything about his own country. By his brutal reforms, his contempt for Islam, his failure to understand the Afghan people, his massive executions of opponents, he aroused the entire country against him in just a few months. The Russians bore this unpopularity, which went against their secret plans, with bad grace. They wanted to make of the Afghanistan borderland a Soviet republic like Outer Mongolia. Whatever they may say today, they let his rival, the impetuous Amin, cut Taraki's throat. Hafizullah Amin was an ambitious man, a Stalinist, the type of man needed in difficult times. One could count on him to accomplish certain tasks, provided he were kept firmly on a leash, if only to get rid of him later by making him, the new scapegoat, responsible for all the world's sins.

Amin began to be a cause for worry when he liquidated not just religious opponents, but supporters of Taraki, by the tens of thousands, installing those faithful to him everywhere.

The crowded prisons were emptied at night. Prisoners went directly from the cells to the firing squad without even a pause for a few minutes before a people's court. On this subject we have the testimony of a high Afghan official who, for understandable reasons, prefers to remain anonymous. He says that at the Foul I Shaki prison, inmates spent almost no time at all. "They were summoned as of nightfall. A noncommissioned officer tied their hands behind their backs and they were taken outside the prison, under the supervision of two Soviet advisers. The deed was done by a platoon made up entirely of noncommissioned and commissioned officers. The men were shot in front of a ditch dug that very morning by a bulldozer, which then covered the bodies and filled the hole, using its spotlight." (Francois Missen, "Le Kabul Syndrome," Edisud.)

If one is to believe Mr Marchais, whose sources are good, the "traitorous comrade" Amin had 150,000 Afghans who were "partisans of peace and democracy" executed. Thus there must be no more communists in Afghanistan, where there were several thousand of them. One wonders what role the Red Army played in this. And who asked it to come, for it could not have been Amin.

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No More Communists in Afghanistan

As his Soviet "friends" reproached Amin for excessively expeditious methods, he recalled the precedents of Lenin and Stalin, who had first of all purged the party and the army the better to deal with the counterrevolution.

It was barely possible to rescue a certain Babrak Karmal from his talons. A good plain communist, industrious and a rather brave man, it was thought that he might yet serve as an alternate card. He was not possessed by a fierce atheism, like Taraki and Amin. He would be told to say his prayers and the Afghan mullahs would be satisfied. The Russians nonetheless took their precautions. To safeguard Amin against any temptation and to warn Washington that henceforth Afghanistan was the private preserve of the Soviets, "unruly elements" assassinated the American ambassador, Adolph Dubs, in February of 1979. Under the approving eye of a KGB colonel who, unfortunately, was a bit too visible in the course of the operation. Which displeased the State Department, resigned though it was to seeing Afghanistan slide into the Soviet orbit. Amin learned his lesson, but not as the Soviets saw it. If he wanted to save his skin he would have to act fast. In order to show that he was not uninvolved in this murder, he sent a personal message to President Carter to convey to him his "profound regret." He packed the Afghan delegation to the United Nations with his men. Through them, he made contact discreetly not only with the Americans but with the moderate Moslem countries on whom he had his eye. Finally, through his brother Abdallah Amin, who is pro-Chinese, he entered into discussions with the agents of Peking, who were providing support to a guerrilla force operating on the short Sino-Afghan frontier, the Shula Yi Jowed.

Amin made no mystery of his plan. He proposed to expel all the Soviet advisers and to ask the Americans and the Chinese, the Yugoslavs, the Arab countries and the UN to guarantee Afghan neutrality.

Amin is a true communist as savage as Emir Abdurrahman. He is not an agent of the CIA or of the Chinese revisionists, as we are asked to believe today. Once rid of the Russians, whose presence was becoming ever more unpopular, and having reached agreement with certain rebel movements against others--and they were much fragmented--he hoped to create in Afghanistan a sort of hereditary, family and absolute communist monarchy, such as that in Albania with Enver Hojda, and in North Korea with Kim Il-sung. Kim Il-sung and Hajda were his models more than Tito, whose luxurious lifestyle was more like that of a monarch.

His tool would be the Afghan army, which he strengthened and provided with modern weapons supplied by the Russians. A part of these weapons disappeared into the neighboring mountains, where the rebellious Moslems determined to be left alone came and went.

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Proud of Their Warrior Past

In November of 1979, relations between Soviet Ambassador Masanov and Amin reached such a tense point that they engaged in insults and threats. Amin demanded that the ambassador be recalled. Obstinate, vain and impulsive, very Afghan in this regard, he went on at length about how the Soviets needed him more than he needed them.

At the same time, he was planning a general army rebellion. As an extra precaution, he had weapons distributed to "militia" forces loyal to him. These were the bands whose ideology was limited to "chasing out the Russians" and hacking the "kafir," or infidel, to bits. Duly warned, the Soviet government sent one of its most eminent representatives, not only an army general but also a high KGB official and first vice minister of internal affairs, Viktor Paputin.

Officially, his mission was to straighten out Amin's thinking. But as there were no longer many illusions about this individual, he dropped all pretense. He organized a counter-putsch much as one organizes counter-fire, within an Afghan army of 100,000 men which 6,000 Soviet military advisers kept well in hand. At least so they believed.

Now relations were very bad between the Soviet military, with their iron discipline in the Prussian style, and the traditionally undisciplined Afghans, proud of their past record as indomitable warriors. As to their "political awareness," it was nil. Getting Marx into an Afghan head poses insurmountable problems.

When Amin learned of the arrival of Viktor Paputin and his assignment, he decided to cross the Rubicon. Since it was no longer possible to expel the Soviet advisers, he had them eliminated in a bloody St Bartholomew's massacre. The muezzins' call to murder replaced the striking of the hour.

Did Viktor Paputin, general, minister, important party member and KGB official, believe his person sacrosanct, as the Roman citizens, whose status was a passport everywhere, once were? He took his chances in Amin's fortified redoubt, and was struck down. At that same moment, Amin launched a general uprising and proclaimed a curfew to allow his troops to operate. Had he received assurances from the Americans and the Chinese? It appears that, without really discouraging him, they mistrusted this Pol Pot in power.

On the night of 26 December, a certain number of Soviet officers serving as advisers were massacred in a horrible way, in some cases with their families, in Kabul. It was to be worse still in the distant garrisons, where the Russians were not numerous enough to rally together and defend themselves--in Herat, in Kandahar, and among the units in the field. The figure of 1,000 dead has been suggested. The exact number will never be known. The Red Army had to act on the spot at the risk of losing its

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reputation, of being reduced to the same rank as the bourgeois states which had abandoned their soldiers and their diplomats. A powerful and organized caste, it places its safety, that of its members and their "honor" above the imperatives of major policy. In the confusion prevailing on the top party levels, it had become the leading power in the USSR.

"The army," explained Helene Carrere d'Encausse, "became a closed circle which recruits from its own ranks and is self-perpetuating. The military career is handed down from father to son. The military marry into military families, and the children go to the same schools. It is more than an army of tradition.

"The Red Army in which the cadres enjoy all sorts of privileges constitutes a closed and protected world.

"In Stalin's day, the military paid for their privileges by total subordination to the political power. In 1979, during a period of great international tension, at a time when it was engaged in foreign theatres of operation, it became an element in political decisions. It has weight in the choices, and is tending to become, in the U.S. manner, a Pentagon which has a free hand with the civilian population. The army enjoys even greater weight--it presents a more serious threat to the apparatus, particularly since the problem of who will succeed Brezhnev is not settled. The army is the military but it is also the heavy industry which works for it, a whole major complex, a whole military and industrial complex whose choices have priority over the other industries."

Parties Replaced by Cliques

This army, without consulting the civil authorities, took immediate action. The need was urgent and it is known how long it takes the Kremlin to make decisions. With Brezhnev sick and "useful" 2 hours a day, the Soviets turned again to a kind of collective leadership.

All the troops available on the periphery of Afghanistan, "Asiatic" units made up mainly of Tadzhik, Uzbek and Turkmen soldiers, were also sent by the tens of thousands to prevent the massacre from spreading and to save the advisers' families.

Hafizullah Amin, in his fortified palace, sought with his supporters to the last cartridge. He was overwhelmed by the bombing planes, the artillery mortars. There were no survivors. He lived and died like a wolf, Afghan above all.

The leaders of Soviet Russia, because of internal problems--who would succeed Brezhnev--thus found themselves reduced to the same "electoral" expedients as the American president. Only the parties were replaced by cliques, and public opinion by what the Red Army thought.

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And in a self-respecting traditional army, it is the officers who think.

On Saturday, 29 December, Radio Kabul announced that order prevailed in the capital, that the rest of the country was totally calm and that the army was in full control of the situation.

With 25,000 Soviet soldiers patrolling Kabul, what army was involved? As to the prevailing calm, there was no one any longer unaware that except for some towns, the country had been beyond government control for months.

Then they brought out Babrak Karmal, who had been on Taraki's team. He was of a princely family, like poor Daud, but a strict follower of Marxism. A puppet. Again he became secretary general of the communist party of Afghanistan, the People's Democratic Party, of which little remained after the two factions, the Khalq and the Parcham, were massacred, supreme commander of an army of which half had deserted while the other half rebelled, chief of state in a nation which had ceased to exist, and president of a revolutionary council which had just been invented. The resistance did not allow itself to be deceived, denouncing Karmal for what he was--a "direct agent and mercenary of the Soviet Union."

Carter's Hawkish Cries

Even before the new chief of state was installed, just as he was landing in an Antonov aircraft thanks to the Soviet airlift, Leonid Brezhnev wished him "great success in his multiple activities in the service of the friendly Afghan people, that people capable of defending the conquests of the revolution, the sovereignty, independence and national dignity of the new Afghanistan."

It would have been hard to push the farce further. Babrak Karmal, a new Ubu in the Afghan fashion, was to go one better. As soon as he was in office, he pointed out his devotion to the sacred religion of Islam and immediately proclaimed a holy war, Jihad, against the enemy--90 percent of the Afghan people rising against communism in the name of Islam of the purest and most intransigent sort, and led by their mullahs!

In this massive intervention, the Soviets took enormous risks--loss of the benefits of a policy of expansion pursued with great mastery, according to a principle earlier dear to John Foster Dulles, using the carrot and the stick. With, to top it all, this fine old Marxist-Leninist ideology, broken down in simplistic slogans for Third-World use. But they could not act otherwise, and the military had made their decision.

In that Christmas 1979 season, everything advised against such intervention. A recent survey had revealed that the Americans, awakened from their apathy, were ready to accept the risk of war. Carter, in the midst of an electoral campaign, could not be insensitive to this change in the atmosphere.

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Abandoning his image as a dove, he had already emitted some sharp hawkish cries. It meant taking on the Moslem world, destroying the Iranian advantage, and reawakening opposition in the Moslem republics of the USSR.

To prevent Iran from slipping into the American camp, the Russians had to take their precautions: those Islamic "students" whom they had controlled secretly since training them in West Beirut and who opposed the release of the hostages in Tehran.

The economic situation in Russia was catastrophic. Brezhnev himself had just admitted this. Forty percent of the national product was being absorbed by the manufacture of weapons, the maintenance of the expeditionary corps engaged in distant colonial ventures, and the liberation movements which sometimes burned themselves out.

Even a Cuban soldier sent to Africa had to be fed and paid.

Tired of working for a paradise which they could not see approaching, the Soviets abandoned themselves to frenetic absenteeism, negligence, black marketing and alcoholism. Even the best-maintained sectors such as transportation, the railroads, were going downhill.

Plants shut down, others were functioning at only 30 percent capacity. The only exceptions were the army and the industrial sectors it controlled directly, and which absorbed all of the skilled manpower and essential raw materials. Added to this, an unprecedented farm deficit developed. The USSR had to purchase 40 million tons of wheat that year, which could only be supplied to it by America, Canada and Western Europe.

A popular dissatisfaction which was in no way ideological was openly manifested. Its source lay in the dearth not only of consumer goods, but of essential supplies as well. Meat could no longer be found. Supplies of vegetables had to be obtained from the black market, where prices had doubled. The "far-off wars" were blamed.

The intellectuals, the performers, all of those whom the regime was stifling and who were challenging the elite in power, had given Russia a hateful image which only the "believers" still rejected.

Finally, the satellites, with the exception of Bulgaria, which had practically become a Soviet republic, and Cuba, were showing ever-increasing reluctance to go along in servile fashion with the USSR and to follow it in its African or Asiatic ventures.

It was within this unfavorable context that the Afghan intervention was undertaken, at the demand of the military, to whom the "civilians" in the Central Committee could only bow, knowing what they risked losing.

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However it was hoped in the Kremlin, and the marshals had promised, that it would all be settled in 8 days.

Low-Level Conscripts

One can imagine the scene. Reassured, after having sent Brezhnev off to bed, for he was badly fatigued, the leaders of the Central Committee proposed a toast: "To Peter the Great, our genial guide and master. May he rejoice in his grave. We have honored his legacy. Our cossacks are maintaining order in Warsaw . . . Beg pardon, the tanks and helicopters of our valiant Red Army have reestablished democratic legality in Kabul."

But this improvised intervention developed badly. It was only possible to mobilize a single elite division in time--the parachute troops dropped on Kabul, less than 10,000 men.

The other troops in the area were units recruited from the Asian republics, conscripts and draftees who proved to be less than brilliant soldiers. They provided proof before all of the journalistic and other commentators gathered in Kabul. They had poor command of the equipment they were using, in particular tanks. Their liaison work was bad, their electronic mastery inadequate, and their air-ground coordination poor.

They had no idea of what they had come to Afghanistan to do. The Turkmen, Uzbek and Tadzhik troops speak the dialects of the Afghans. They feel a moderate solidarity with the European Russians, but are closer to these Moslems they were supposed to fight. Some deserted.

As soon as it was possible, the Soviet command replaced them with better-equipped, better-trained troops, taken from the Warsaw Pact reserves. It cleared out the foreign journalists. But meanwhile the rebellion had been swelled by 60,000 deserters from the Afghan army, who had come over with their weapons and baggage. The remaining 40,000 were stripped of their weapons and confined to their barracks, with Soviet guns trained on them.

Later, when they were sent into operation, the Soviets would be behind them, ready to make them the targets in order to block any temptation to flee or to turn against them. Nothing was settled either in a week or in a month. The Soviet general staff had to settle for reduced capacity. If the Americans supplied the rebels with small individual ground-air or air-ground type Sam or Milan or Crotal missiles, they would suffer horrible casualties. They could no longer supply the troops by air. Their helicopters and their transport aircraft would be shot down like chickens; their tanks would be exploded by mines or would burn in the Hindu-Kush mountain passes. They would lose equipment and men. It was necessary at all costs to ensure that Carter abandoned the Afghan resistance or the Red Army would be engulfed for years in an interminable war.

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Sagging Soviet Capacity

The Soviet advisers were increasingly unwelcome. The image of the "ugly American" was replaced by that of the ugly Russian. They were shot at in Syria. The Guardians of the Revolution, whose officers are Palestinians, had to intervene to prevent the occupation of the Soviet embassy in Tehran. Without their troops, without their secret police bolstered by East Germans with fine Nazi features, they would have been chased out of Africa.

They could only supply weapons, guns and tanks which proved on use to be of poor quality. Only their military advisers proved valuable. In the realm of the economy or agriculture, the experts from the East proved a disaster. They supplied neither the grain nor the seed so badly needed, but only a mistaken method of using them, and no complete medical team.

Wherever the red flag flies in the world, even in the countries which formerly largely met their own food needs, there are lines outside empty stores and the people are dying of hunger. In Afghanistan, the formidable Red Army not only cannot subdue the bands of poorly armed rebels but is suffering reverses, revealing its human and technical weaknesses. To excuse them, the Soviet Union accuses foreign forces--the Chinese or the Americans, who, happily for them, have not really become involved. The astounded world wonders if it was not duped, if the Red Army is truly that invulnerable force of which they are sick and tired of hearing. The Soviet soldiers with their shaved heads, despite their indoctrination and their three years of compulsory service, are dragging their feet, as ours did in Algeria. They are not keen on spilling their blood in Afghanistan.

The Soviet army is supplied with costly, impressive equipment which has its effect in parades but which is outdated, badly finished, infinitely less sturdy than is claimed. It is above all adapted to broad cavalry deployments in the steppes. It is not designed to stand up against modern weaponry. Missiles which cost only \$1,000 apiece and which can be used by any guerrilla fighter after a half-day's practice, and which can be carried by a single man over difficult terrain, transform the 40-ton T72 tank, said to be the most modern in the world, a MIG 27, the armored attack helicopter and the big Antonov into smoking metal. This equipment, on top of it all, requires gun crews, pilots, and drivers whose training is lengthy and excessively costly. All of the great names in Soviet diplomacy were mobilized to come to the aid of the army, the pride of the regime, so that it would not lose its reputation and its prestige in the passes of Afghanistan, which would mean the end of Soviet ambitions. It was Dobrynin who was sent to Washington, before Gromyko, and Chernovenko to Paris and Lunkov to London. In connection with the Olympic Games, an effort was made to set the Europeans and Americans one against the other. The tone has changed greatly. In order to "save detente," they say, they propose the neutralization of Afghanistan. What do they ask in exchange? No rockets, no individual missiles for the Afghan rebels. The rest is diplomatic verbiage and

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vague promises. How could it be otherwise, since we know that the Russians would never allow Afghanistan, any more than they would Hungary, Poland or Czechoslovakia, to move out of their zone of influence.

The Soviets are condemned to win in Afghanistan, where the credibility of their army and their world policy is at stake. They must carry through to the end, taking all the risks even if it means exterminating the Afghan people. Already they are using napalm, and, in contempt of all international agreements, asphyxiating gases, as in Laos.

What will Carter do?

Nixon made this terrible judgment of him:

"Someone said that Mr Carter is a newly converted hawk. Well, we are all familiar with these religious revivals during which the village drunkard prostrates himself in the dust and claims to be born again. The next morning he is drinking again."

Probing the Wound

One can imagine what Nixon would do in Carter's place. He would probe mercilessly in the Soviet wound, and make the Kremlin pay for Vietnam. Then he would negotiate on his conditions, and they would be harsh.

Will President Carter profit from the opportunity to restore order in this part of the world, to put an end to any sharing of the costs by Iran and Afghanistan?

The USSR hoped to win a world empire, at least to carve for itself the leading place, without ever having recourse to total war, because it would lose it, which neither the Russian people nor the old men in the Kremlin want. Their strategists relied on their competence to win the game by taking the opponent's pawns one after the other, to force him imperceptibly toward defeat, without ever making a direct attack on the key pieces, which would have led to the atomic cataclysm.

On that night of 26 December 1979, in a mediocre settlement of accounts, Russia had to come out in the open and everything was laid open to challenge. Sweeping the board with the back of its hand, destiny proved that it remains the supreme master of the game, for it was subject to no rules, much less any ideology.

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MAURITANIA

OFFICIAL DISCUSSES NATION'S INDUSTRIALIZATION POLICY

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 May 80 p 1261

[Text] Mr Abdellahi Ould Bah, Mauritania's Director of Industrialization, recently discussed, with the daily CHAAB, his country's industrialization policy, which is centered on the "promotion of small and average-sized business, which should be the work of national, Mauritanian business men, possibly in association with foreign partners.

"To that end, we have adopted an investment code in agreement with political orientations in the industrial field. This code makes room for small and average businesses, to which it gives substantial advantages by way of exemption from import duties on raw materials and also financial exemptions (BIC, etc.) and other administrative incentive measures, as well as financial facilities (lines of credit at the Mauritanian Development and Commerce Bank (BMDC) with assistance from the World Bank).

"In executing this policy, we are trying to set up some agencies, in particular, the unit for industrial promotion and study. This unit is already in existence and is combined with the Ministry of Industry administration. It offers concrete assistance to developers of industrial projects. This assistance is for development of feasibility studies and for management of existing industrial units.

"It should also be noted that an investment and guarantee fund is to be established as soon as possible, which will help investors to resolve some of their financial difficulties. The establishment of an improved industrial area being developed at Nouakchott should also be noted. Development studies for this project are to begin in May.

"In addition, studies have been undertaken to focus on economic legislation, and especially on legislation related to the industrial sector. The aim of these studies is to bring into line the various legislative decrees and to improve the legal context in which the industrial promotion operation is developing."

Mr Bah also pointed out that the "Rosso textile project had to be abandoned because the studies developed at the time indicated that it was not profitable under existing conditions. However, industry leaders are working hard at the present time to renew this project. Contacts have been made with both Mauritanian and foreign investors for that purpose.

Finally, Mr Bah stated that "sugar and oil refineries have been constructed over a period of several years at a total cost of approximately 6 billion ouguiyas. Up to the present time, these industrial plants could not be operated. At the present time, action is being taken to find solutions. As for the sugar refinery, discussions are currently underway with the companies or firms which developed this project. These discussions should lead to the reopening of the refinery. In the case of the oil refinery, a solution should be reached as soon as possible."

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SYRIA

DETAILS OF AL-ASAD ASSASSINATION ESCAPE REPORTED

JNO71147 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 5 Jun 80 p 18

[Text] Contrary to what has been reiterated by some news agencies and radio stations, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI affirms that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad was not wounded in the assassination attempt to which he was subjected in Damascus last week. He only suffered bruises and contusions in the leg.

A well-informed Syrian diplomatic source has given AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI the details of the assassination attempt from which President Al-Asad miraculously escaped. He said that an armored presidential car had driven the president to the Presidential Palace, located on Abu Rummanah Street in Damascus, where he was scheduled to accompany his guest, the Niger chief of state, to the Damascus Airport to see him off following his visit to Syria.

The palace guard, composed mainly of military policemen, opened the outer iron gate to admit the president's car and his escort, when the car stopped in the inner lawn of the palace, presidential aide Kahlid al-Husayn rushed forward to open the car's righthand door. As soon as the president put his right foot out of the door, rapid fire salvos were opened in the direction of the car. The aide immediately pushed the president back into the car and strongly slammed the door. Al-Asad's right leg was bruised when he failed to pull it back in time.

The Syrian diplomatic source adds that President Al-Asad's delay by seconds in getting out of the car was sufficient to save his life. Those who had fired the shots quickly hurled two grenades at the car, but they did not explode. One of them threw a third grenade which rolled and came to a stop near the car. However, one of the guards kicked it away from the car. It exploded at a far distance and wounded several aides.

The Syrian diplomatic source said that it was revealed that the attackers were four military policemen commanded by a first lieutenant from the palace guard.

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As a result, a fierce battle ensued between the Syrian president's guards and the military policemen in which machine guns and RPG rockets were used. The battle stretched to the main square in front of the palace and the Nura Square in the middle of Abu Rummanah Street as well as the squares and streets nearby, including the side-street on which the Al-Sharq Club is located. The battle lasted several hours. Reinforcements arrived and managed to besiege the attackers. The sound of fire and the explosion of bombs and rockets was heard in the palace vicinity and the streets leading to it.

The Syrian source said that four military policemen were killed in the battle. A fifth, who was trying to escape from the palace, was apprehended. The source added that two of President Al-Asad's aides were killed and six others were wounded in the battle, including Khalid al-Husayn and 'Aziz Skaf. The area in which the battle took place was searched and combed after a curfew was imposed following the battle.

President Al-Asad was quickly taken to a military hospital to have his leg administered to. He was forced to not attend several public ceremonies which he was scheduled to patronize.

The Syrian source said that the investigation revealed that the four military policemen who were killed come from Aleppo and the districts surrounding it. It will be recalled that Aleppo, the second largest city in Syria, was recently subjected to stringent military measures in the wake of disturbances that have erupted against the regime.

The intelligence service and the investigation quarters have shrouded the identities and affiliations of the assailants with secrecy. However, it is believed that they belong to armed and violent religious groups that have recently renewed their activities in the wake of a fierce manhunt to which they have been subjected.

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TUNISIA

FATE OF STUDENTS, TRADE UNION DETAINERS EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 28 May 80 pp 52-53

[Article by our correspondent in Tunis, Souhayr Belhassen]

[Text] Can any consideration be expected for the 38 students and teachers still in prison? And for the trade unionists? When release is being mentioned...

"Our son is thrown into a dark and stifling cell where day cannot be distinguished from night, impregnated with the nauseating smell of the toilets, in a hole set up in a corner. Large rats fight with the flies and mosquitoes over the refuse which is accumulating. Water is obtained from the outside and its flow depends on the goodwill of the guard..."

"At present our son is fed noodles boiled in salt water, a sort of worms and strange insects soup, chick peas colored with a little tomato sauce which he must swallow within an hour for fear that the 'food' would turn sour.

"Our son is ill now, he has hemorrhoids due to lack of exercise, and because of his ill treatment he has a heart condition."

Letter from parents.

"These are the conditions under which our son is living because one day he dared to exercise his right to liberty of expression and organization. He waits for our visit, from the far south where we live, to meet him once a month for 10 minutes separated by a 1.50 m wall and wire netting..."

This is one of the letters from parents of 13 detainees from the clandestine Chaab group, addressed to JEUNE AFRIQUE. Will this ordeal ever come to an end? In the present political climate marked by the evident official wish for relaxation from tension (JEUNE AFRIQUE No 1010) public opinion would like to believe in a goodwill gesture. Especially in regard to the 38 "students" (in fact there are also some teachers) who are still imprisoned: 14 members of the Marxist-Leninist group el-Amel el-Tounsi (the Tunisian worker), 13 affiliated with the Marxist-Leninist clandestine Chaab, three

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students accused of having provoked the riots at the Bardo II university city in 1977, four from the PRPT (Tunisian People's Revolutionary Party), and four from the FPLT (Progressive Front for Tunisian Liberation).

The oldest, most of the 14 members of el-Amel el-Tounsi, were arrested in February 1975. After being placed in solitary confinement for 3 months, they were tried and sentenced, with 101 of their comrades, in October of the same year, to serve for a term from six to nine years of prison without probation. They are now 27 to 32 years old. Their seniority won them a chance to be regrouped in the Tunis central prison, after having fought for the improvement in the conditions of their imprisonment (health, food, care), and for the promulgation of a statute for detainees. In five years each one of them will have been on strike for more than 150 days, the longest, 22 days, was for assembling in the same prison.

The 13 members of the Chaab clandestine movement had seen the conditions of their detention deteriorate on 27 March, the day of the verdict of the Gafsa trial. But also the epilogue of the Chaab suit under appeal which was settled by the acquittal of five members of the group, out of eighteen. This, after 16 months of detention for trial under such conditions that at the present time one of them has lost his teeth, and another one lost his mind. The other 13 group members have had their sentences reduced to two or three years in prison and to 400 to 250 dinars in fines, and are now scattered in various penitentiaries: six in Sfax in a room with 40 common right detainees, two in Sousse with 60 common rights, three in Kasserine and finally two in Borj Roumi (Bizerte).

Dampness and cold.

For a whole year their wives, who were working in the interior of the country, had tried to get transferred to the capital in order to be able to visit their husbands in prison and to take some food to them twice weekly. On 27 March they were forced to do the opposite. Only one ten minute visit instead of twice a week for one hour each visit. The detainees' daily walk reduced by three-fourths, only lasts 15 minutes. Newspapers are cancelled.

The three Bardo II students, Samir Abdallah, Ahmed Amara and Tahar Loussaief, are in the Borj Roumi penitentiary. They were between 18 and 21 years old when they were sentenced to five years in prison in November 1977. This old weapons depot, seven kilometers from Bizerte, made up of several isolated blocks separated by a high tension wire, is sadly known for its cellar cut out of the stone, 32 steps below ground level and arranged into cells where the humidity and cold are particularly unbearable due to the proximity of the sea. In this prison, which is never cleaned, the smell of the excrements and the total darkness end up by breaking down the "hard heads." That is where can also be found the 18 members of the Gafsa commando condemned for a period of six months to 20 years in prison.

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As regards the four members of the PRPT, Brahim Tobal's party, former yousefist, located in Algeria, they are serving their prison terms with the four members of FPLT (pro Libyan) in the civil prison in Tunis.

In addition to these 38 political detainees there are two members of the UGTT (General Tunisian Labor Union) administration commission and about ten union militants. Beyond making the government representation more credible, releasing the students, who were arrested, ill treated and condemned for their opinions, would have the effect of (almost) emptying the prisons of political detainees.

Photo Captions: Three of the 38: Bacheddine Jamoussi (left), Makni Mongi (center), and Anis Chouaykh (below), at present in the Sfax prison.

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WESTERN SAHARA

BRIEFS

SWAZILAND RECOGNIZES SDAR--On 24 May, the Ministry of Information of the SDAR (Saharan Democratic Arab Republic) issued a communique in which it announced Swaziland's decision to recognize officially the Saharan Republic. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 May 80 p 1254] 9174

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END