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JPRS L/9237

6 August 1980

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 29/80)

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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AFGHANISTAN

WRITER QUESTIONS WHETHER AFGHANS FIGHTING, DYING ALONE

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1017, 2 Jul 80 pp 14-15

[Article by Michel Jobert: "Are They 'Fighting Alone, Dying Alone'?"]

[Text] Will the Afghans fight alone? Will they die alone? To the questions arising from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 the answer is evident and overwhelming: yes, the Afghans are fighting alone; yes, they will die alone. Despite twisted claims to the contrary. Despite resolutions drawn up in a noble but hollow and threadbare style. Despite the farce of the Moscow Olympics boycott and the seeming and illusory American wheat embargo against the USSR. Despite Giscard d'Estaing's remonstrances tending to justify the Warsaw summit, except that the public does not know its content and does not see its effect yet. Despite what Schmidt, the German chancellor, will say at the end of this month with the same confidential firmness in Moscow. Despite the Islamabad Islamic conference and its calculated prudence. Despite China whose cries are less strong than usual and who does nothing at all. Despite the "preoccupations" of Mrs Gandhi to whom the Soviet ally is all the more useful as it is not too close to India. Despite the declaration of European leaders on 13 June in Venice, expressing "Europe's deep concern about intensified Soviet military operations," and demanding that "the Afghan people freely exercise their right to self-determination." Come on! Since the outset of the Russian operation in Afghanistan all these protesters and makers of communique have agreed to say the least possible about it. To begin with, the United States which has shown little concern since the 1978 pro-communist coup d-etat, despite the assassination of its own ambassador, Adolph Dubbs, in 1979. In their attempt to divide the world between themselves and the Russians, the Americans have accepted to put Afghanistan under Soviet thumb, provided that it is not too obvious. In 1979, the Russians sent out several warnings of their intervention, yet the Americans raised no eyebrows. Thus why would have the Soviets been uneasy? Likewise, in 1975 they were hardly worried in Angola since President Ford and his Secretary of State Kissinger had consented to let them intervene with their Cuban mercenaries. Most governments, although stunned by the cynicism and brutality of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, have seen fit to close their eyes, taking refuge instead in this heroic and

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classic declaration, "This time around, we hush it up, but let's say that it be the last one!" How can such an attitude fail to remind us--the European peoples especially--of the weaknesses of our governments from 1936 onward, in the face of successive pawn-capturing attacks by Hitler? Forty-four years later, the sons of ostriches behave just as did their mothers of yesterday. Like their mothers, they hide their heads in the sands at the first sign of rumbling danger.

As for Afghanistan's immediate neighbors, they are too frightened to budge. Pakistan, duly warned by the Soviets, has resigned itself to welcoming Pathan refugees whose home, it should be noted, is either Pakistan or Afghanistan. Does General Zia want to show that Americans have not the least intention to provide him with money and necessary weapons? Moreover, wouldn't India cash in on the opportunity offered by such tension? Shi'ite Iran talks big with its "holy war" appeal to rescue Sunnite Afghanistan, but how can it do otherwise, given the foot-dragging paralysis into which it has sunk? China, realistic and careful, doesn't want to be a poacher, and for that reason it regards Afghanistan as Soviet "hunting ground." Egypt would have clandestinely sent in a few arms shipments and Saudi Arabia would have forked out some money.

Besides, at the very beginning of the bloody Russian operation the deal was striking. "Occupy Afghanistan if you can, but be sure to understand that you have to stop right there. And above all, don't be tempted by Iranian weakness to go beyond Afghan borders!" In a sense, things would have returned to normal had it not been for repeated American errors on Iran, whetting even more Soviet appetite.

But voila! Afghans have refused to play the game, at the point of embarrassing everyone now! Undeterred by the conviction that they have to fight and die alone, they are now fighting and dying alone! Starving, hiding out in the mountains, moving by night, carrying old guns, audaciously--a quality enhanced by the surrounding wall of cowardice--they are fighting and dying alone.

Why? To defend one of the lowest living standards in the world against the socialist paradise, determined to annex their country with napalm, gas and executions? To save an "archaism" which, nevertheless, is no more absurd than many servitudes of the modern world? To serve "these reactionary forces" with which Soviet propaganda fills prefab hells being exported by Moscow? To satisfy the folly of mountaineers and shepherds for whom guerilla warfare would be "social promotion," as dime-a-dozen Western humorists put it!

No! The Afghans are fighting because they know, better than many others, that is difficult to live and easy to die. They need no hope to fight. To be true, they have no free choice: international indifference has never been so lamentable toward a people falling prey to aggression and deadly

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peril. Their resistance, so easily anticipated--nonetheless, so surprising for those accustomed to overlooking the resolve of a people--has upset the judgment of cold-hearted monsters. Events in the past few months have attested to that reversion: in the first place, at issue was how to whack up a pie and to get the message across; then to draw a new line at Soviet expansionism, hoping that the Russians will soon be behind the eight ball of their own making. Chiefs of state are now playing the role of zealous intermediaries to "save the face" of Moscow and, additionally, that of communist parties in the world which have dared to ignore or justify the Soviet aggression. All this is being done as if it is irrational to hear the cries for freedom of an entire people coming from the nightly depths of slavery, and rational to keep the torturer's face from being exposed to full daylight!

What statesman straying from their duties fail to proclaim, public opinions and "men in the street," their fragility notwithstanding, must do with solemnity: the Afghan fight is our fight now against that Fascist totalitarianism, which is Soviet communism. With bombs, napalm, gas, machine guns and rockets, Soviet armored helicopters are attacking bare-handed guerrillas: men who want freedom at the point of dying for it, before hearing the ring of the "last hour of fate"! It is them who save world peace and not all those prudent capitulators who buy, with others' lives, the prolongation of their threatened quietude. They believe that they can get away with it by going from one thing to another, hardly showing any remorse. What a foolishness!

The Third World, a Muslim world rising above its divisions, Westerners still lucid and freed from a near-sighted egoism, European peoples under Soviet control and the communists who don't want to apologize later for concealing their present ignorance, all must make known by their daily attitude their horrified reprobation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Then the Afghans will no longer be alone, and perhaps they will no longer die for the defense of their mountains and villages only.

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ALGERIA

CHADLI STYLE OF GOVERNING EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 9 Jul 80 pp 14-15

[Article by Jean-Louis Buchet: "Chadli Is Not Sadat"]

[Text] There were 17 of them; there are only seven left. No new men in the FLN (National Liberation Front, the single party), whose make-up, as decreed by President Chadli Benjedid, was made public after an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee (28-29 June). Some semi-surprises, nevertheless, such as the presence of Abdelaziz Bouteflika among the four former members of the Revolutionary Council retained in the politburo.

Good Influence

The fiery foreign affairs minister, Houari Boumedienne, who was sidelined at one time, confirms by these moves that he is returning to the front of the stage as certain signs indicated (JEUNE AFRIQUE No 1012). Mohamed Salah Yahiaoui is still there, but his post of "party coordinator" has been abolished. Col Abdallah Belhouchet, inspector general of the armed forces, and Rabah Bitat, president of the assembly and interim chief of state on the death of Boumedienne (27 Dec 1978), are the other two survivors. For their part, two men whose sincerity and honesty are praised, but who are not figures of the first rank: Boualem Benhamouda, who has been minister of the Interior for a short time, because, it is said, of his Arab-Muslim sensitivity, and Mohamed Said Maazouzi, a native Kabyle; he is a former minister, a former prefect of Tizi-Ouzou. And of course Chadli himself, who is in charge of the whole thing.

For, as the extraordinary party congress (15-19 June) decided, in addition to reducing its membership the politburo sees its role redefined. While it was awaiting an especially weighty decision which would confront the various groups that have sprung up since Chadli came to power (7 Feb 1979)--which had paralyzed government action--it became a kind of restrained government that includes the chief of state's principal advisers. Among the departures one notices Kasdih Merbah, the former head of military security, who was very active in Chadli's election; but he retains his duties as secretary general of the Defense Ministry.

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In the opinion of most commentators the chief of state, who in May obtained "full powers" from the Central Committee and whose position had been strengthened as a result of the congress, is finally indispensable. And though the politburo reflects a certain balanced mixture, a new more homogeneous governmental team should be formed, in which "the president's men" would have star billing. We add that Chadli has been given the means of setting up "his" policy. Which might be a challenge to the Boumedienne legacy.

Prudence

In summary, Chadli would have been--Sadat. A hasty and even false conclusion, it seems, drawn from an analysis that limits the current development of Algeria to Chadli's struggle for power. Which is not the whole truth--far from it.

Moreover, though he has elbow room today, the president's position as No 1 has never been contested. Yahiaoui himself, who is too often presented as a rival, can be considered the head of a significant movement, of a different sensitivity. But he does not seem to have sought a test of strength with a president who has the support of the army, who also presides over the Council of Ministers, "holds" Defense and directs the party as secretary general. That is just about--as many powers as Boumedienne had. Of course the two men are not alike. But doesn't the successor have enough assets on hand to eliminate his adversaries? And to start a movement in the opposite direction by invoking the example of the departed?

He did not do it, however. Even Belaid Abdesselam, the much-criticized former boss of Economy, is not completely left out of the system. There are changes, but they are made smoothly, with maximum respect for appearances. Officially it is the congress or the central committee that makes the decisions while the president consults his mandate or the Charter, etc. No sudden exclusions or abrupt changes of course. Chadli demonstrates pragmatism.

He wants--and he is not alone in this--a better-functioning economic apparatus, elimination of the most serious gaps, a limitation on gigantism in industry, an effort in favor of agricultural and social measures. The slogan of the congress was evocative: "For a Better Life." The program is being taken up again by means of nationalized corporations, less far-reaching corruption, improved distribution channels, etc. But there is no question of harking back to the socializing option of the economy or government monopolies. The basics remain the same.

In the same spirit Chadli has released the political prisoners and--awaiting Ben Bella's total liberation--he is stressing democratization. But there is no question of multipartism, opening up to the opposition, real freedom of the press. In Kabylie the worst has been avoided. And in the future, according to the president's vows, more account will be taken of the country's cultural diversity. But Algeria's exclusively Arab-Muslim character, as it has been defined since the 1976 Charter, is being vigorously reaffirmed.

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Pragmatism, flexible in form and basically faithful; this is Chadli's policy. Boumedienne with a human face. To whom can he be compared? Much more than to Sadat, he can be compared to Nikita Krushchev succeeding Joseph Stalin. Keeping everything in proportion, of course, it seems that the Algerian revolution follows--albeit more swiftly--steps similar to those of the Soviet Revolution. Ben Bella (1963-1965) was the agitated period, confused and yet "romantic," that the USSR experienced from 1917 to 1924. Then when Boumedienne came to power, a longer and more difficult phase opens. Somewhat like what went on--again keeping everything in proportion--in the Soviet Union under Stalin: millions of deaths in no time at all. In both cases there is the absolute reign of one man. The foundations of the system are established.

The Army's Role

Still following this comparison, Algiers 80 would be a little like Moscow 56. And Chadli, like Krushchev a centrist who knows how to protect the basics while eliminating the most negative aspects of the preceding period. Which is also a way of consolidating and stabilizing the system. Since Krushchev a balance has been established between the various groups and sensitivities being expressed behind the No 1, confronting each other in times of crisis. But the political class in power has solidarity, plays the game and respects the forms. Like Algeria today, where Bouteflika and Yahiaoui cohabit when they are around Chadli. Another comparable element is the role of the army. Important, indubitably decisive, but diffuse and slippery. What influence has the military brought to bear behind Chadli? Interpretations vary. As in the USSR, in every circumstance, and again recently with regard to Afghanistan.

Still following this thesis, in several years Algeria will have a Brezhnev at its head. And we will soon be hearing a "Chadli report" spoken of, as the devastating Krushchev report on Stalin's crimes was heard at the 20th congress of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union].

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ALGERIA

FLN CONGRESS SESSIONS ANALYZED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 7 Jul 80 p 14

[Article by Abou Ferial: "The Men of the Charter"]

[Text] "It was a frank and democratic debate, the living illustration of the responsible democracy that defines the Chadli style better than any other qualifier." This was the reaction of one of the delegates, a member of a kasma* in the capital. The 4,000 delegates, meeting under the white dome of the omnisports hall of the Cheraga Olympic complex, had been conscious since the meeting began of the role of "the conscience of the popular grass roots" that they had been called upon to play. They had also struggled during the work of the congress--which lasted four days--to express as faithfully as they could the aspirations of that popular grass roots, by means of as critical as possible an evaluation of the political, economic and social situation of the country, so that the recovery so desired by all may operate on healthy foundations.

The congress opened with a vigorous appeal by President Chadli for a "permanent mobilization" of the rank and file to realize the objectives of the National Charter. At the end of the second day of work, which was divided between plenary sessions and committees, a debate was entered into on the initiative of the chief of state. This was a great moment.

From 2100 until dawn the delegates engaged in a critique in accordance with rules, concerning the functioning of the basic institutions and organizations of the party and the government, pointing to "deviations that are in danger of hampering the forward progress of the party and the revolution."

A Background Critique

In direct language most of the participants approached the crucial question of the choice of men to whom they would entrust responsibilities at all levels in this new phase of Algeria's development. Expressing a profound popular sentiment, they denounced the "patriots false to the revolutionary word," the "deviationists" and "those with unashamed fortunes who preach socialism."

*A section of the party.

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Careerism, nepotism, authoritarianism, corruption, misappropriation of funds and double talk were matters before the bar. Because of its direct and impassioned tone, and also because of its spontaneity, the discussion reminded many of the popular debate on the National Charter that took place throughout the country in 1976. This debate, too, is certain to be a date in the annals of Algerian political life.

Two points appeared on the agenda of the extraordinary congress, provided for in February 1979 when the 4th congress that brought Chadli Bendjedid to power was extended: evaluation of the economic situation; adoption of the great directions of the Five Year Plan (1980-1984) and amendment of certain articles of the FLN statutes. In his opening speech the Algerian chief of state set the framework of the debates by emphasizing on the one hand that "evaluation does not mean judging an individual or a group of individuals. It means adding up the positive and negative aspects, with strengthening of one and elimination of the other." This applies to the economy. Bringing up political questions, he added that the proposed amendments came out of the experience of the past 18 months and "the need to re-examine certain provisions of the party statute, so as to make it a faithful expression of the spirit of the National Charter and more in harmony with the country's constitution." The amendment proposals had been established in the past by the central committee in extraordinary session.

The first modification: the congress granted the secretary general of the FLN the statutory means to make the party function more efficiently--especially its executive board, the politburo--, bringing this about through greater flexibility in making up the politburo. In this way the number of politburo members, which used to vary from 17 to 22, is reduced in the new statutes to 7 to 11. On the other hand, even while remaining collectively responsible to the central committee, these office-holders become equally responsible to the secretary general, who divides the tasks among them. This more precise definition of each one's prerogatives will allow for more homogeneity at that level.

Two other significant modifications were granted by those attending the congress. The first outlines the task of the party, whose mission at the internal level is "to build socialism within the framework of national and Islamic values." The second concerns relations between the FLN and the mass organizations: labor unions, youth, women, combatants and peasants (UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers], UNJA [National Union of Algerian Youth], UNFA [National Union of Algerian Women], Moudjahidine and UNPA [National Union of Algerian Peasants]). The new Art 120 in fact stipulates that the party is to "play a driving, directing and controlling role in mass organization activities. Only that which is militant and structured at party headquarters may be acceded to the leaders in the mass organizations." The latter provision is to be applied in stages, with the central committee in charge of defining it.

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Work for Principles

But one of the most important results of the sessions was most assuredly the unreserved affirmation of support for President Chadli by the 4,000 members in attendance. In his closing speech he recalled a concept that has always nourished the Algerian revolution, that militants must work for "principles and not for one person or a group of persons." Defining the criteria for choosing men, he stressed the fact that "sentiment has no place in this area. It guarantees neither the strength of the state nor the future of the revolution nor the future of the fatherland." Finally, approaching the problems of democracy, he made a solemn pledge to continue and strengthen the policy of dialog begun at his accession to power: "We are convinced," he said, "that political leadership that does not practise dialog with the grass roots runs the risk of being isolated." This reminder was warmly applauded by those in attendance; it underlines the perspective from which President Chadli intends to approach the new phase of Algeria's development.

It reinforces the decisions of the congress that give the chief of state the necessary statutory means, especially those that enable him to surround himself with a team in order to carry out the tasks of building in accordance with the National Charter, the ideologic reference source of the Algerian revolution.

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IRAN

QOTBZADEH DISCUSSES CONDITIONS FOR RELEASE OF HOSTAGES

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 4 Jul 80 p 47

[Interview with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sadeq Qotbzadeh by PARIS MATCH in Paris--date not given]

[Text] The Tehran hostages are beginning their 38th week of detention. Are they threatened with that death more terrible than death, oblivion? "No," the Iranian minister of foreign affairs, at present visiting in Paris, told PARIS MATCH. "We are going to reactivate negotiations. But they will be on our terms, which are the following."

[Question] While we are talking, Western delegates are meeting in Venice. What do you expect of this conference as far as Iran is concerned?

[Answer] We would have liked the Europeans to take advantage of this meeting to show a bit of understanding for our country and to demonstrate a little independence vis-a-vis the United States. Europe could play a big economic and political role if it were allied with the Third World instead of always siding with the two superpowers. But the Europeans do not want to understand that the superpowers are only superpowers for themselves, not for us.

[Question] Speaking of superpowers, what do you think of the announcement of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan?

[Answer] It is a political maneuver. And intended not only for the participants of the Venice conference. Because this announcement also comes at a time when the Islamic Committee for Afghanistan has just held its first session in Switzerland, where the next conference of African chiefs of state is also going to be held. So, the Russians are killing three birds with one stone. Or at least, they think they are.

[Question] What do you think of the fact that Moscow gave the scoop on the news to France?

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[Answer] It is an enormous blunder, if not a downright scandal. For, after all, the news concerned first of all Afghanistan's neighbors and, first among them, Iran.

[Question] Still, your relations with the Russians are not so bad. You just recently signed new economic agreements with them. Wouldn't there be some thought of blackmailing the Western nations behind them?

[Answer] We simply renegotiated agreements with the Soviets that already existed when the shah was in power. And we have proposed the same renegotiation with the West. But the Western nations refused, while the Soviets accepted. If blackmail is involved, on which side is it?

[Question] Between the West and Iran, there is the matter of the hostages, which blocks all efforts. In connection with this, where do we stand with this celebrated affair of the hostages? For 8 months there have been so many ups and downs and your positions have varied so often that we no longer have any clear idea of what is going on at all.

[Answer] A great deal of progress has been made. The Americans finally understand that they will achieve nothing through violence and pressure. This is very important for the future.

[Question] And the future, what will that be? What sort of procedure do you have in mind for a settlement?

[Answer] For the time being, we are putting together a report on the matter which should be presented to the Iranian Parliament.

[Question] When?

[Answer] When the Parliament, which has just been elected, begins its deliberations. The deputies will first proceed with the election of committee chairman, then go on to the appointment of Supreme Court judges, which will take about 2 weeks. And then debate on the affair of the hostages, which should specify our terms for negotiation, will begin. This should take another 2 or 3 weeks. In other words, negotiations could begin in a month and a half.

[Question] Could you give us any information on these terms now?

[Answer] There will be two kinds: economic and political.

[Question] Economic, I suppose that means lifting the blockade?

[Answer] Of course. And not only the blockade the Americans and their Western friends are inflicting on us. It also means lifting the embargo the Americans have imposed on Iranian assets that they have frozen and which amount to the enormous sum of \$12 billion.

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[Question] Which includes the \$3 billion American companies operating in Iran during the shah's regime claim under the heading of compensation.

[Answer] Naturally, that question will have to be settled and we can only do so by renegotiating all the agreements we have with the American firms.

[Question] So, you are not opposed to the Americans' resuming operations in Iran?

[Answer] Not at all, if they do so in a way that is advantageous for us as it is for them and is not pure colonial exploitation, as was the case during the shah's regime. We are in no way prejudiced against the United States.

[Question] And the political terms?

[Answer] The Americans will have to clearly and explicitly admit what they have done in Iran. And let them not content themselves with expressing their regrets, which would serve no purpose. Let them conduct a serious and thorough investigation, in accordance with their own laws, as they did in the Watergate case. Let them come out and say which big political, press and business personalities received money from the shah, which of their people they had installed in Iranian governments, what role CIA agents, gangs, etc. played in Iran.

[Question] What purpose will that serve other than to offer you moral satisfaction?

[Answer] It will be very important because it will inform the American people about what their leaders have done in Iran without their knowledge and in their name. And knowing that they could have accounts to settle with their own public, future American governments will not dare to start all over again. Thus, the sacrifices we have endured in confronting American might will have served not only the cause of Iran, but that of all the countries in the world.

[Question] And what if the "Islamic students" do not want to recognize the National Assembly's decisions? What if they refuse to surrender the hostages?

[Answer] As of now, we have a Parliament. It is it and it alone which must make laws. And the students must simply bow to it. Moreover, Khomeyni himself has said so again and again, and quite clearly so.

[Question] Meanwhile, Ayatollah Kalkhali continues to proclaim that he will have partisans of the shah killed wherever they are and that his killer commandos are on the spot throughout the whole world.. A strange kind of legality!

[Answer] That is for domestic consumption. It is not to be taken seriously.

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[Question] Nevertheless, in France your "enforcers" have already claimed at least one victim, Princess Ashraf's son.

[Answer] We had nothing to do with that. That was a squaring of accounts among emigres. We took score and have determined that Iranian emigres are divided into 67 factions! On the basis of these figures, they will soon succeed in eliminating themselves.

[Question] And the shah? Will you go on demanding that he be turned over to you?

[Answer] I would rather not comment on that point. It would be pointless to reinject confusion into the debate.

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IRAN

'REUTER' CITES BEHESHTI ON UNITED STATES HOSTAGES

JN021221 London REUTER in English 1206 GMT 2 Jul 80

[Commentary by Alexander Nicoll]

[Text] Tehran, July 2, REUTER--A senior Iranian religious leader said today he did not think the fate of the U.S. hostages in Iran would be affected if the deposed shah died.

The shah, who is suffering from cancer, is in a Cairo hospital.

Reporters asked Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti if the hostages would be affected should the shah die.

Dr Beheshti, a leading figure in the clergy-led Islamic Republican Party and the ruling Revolutionary Council, said:

"I don't think the fate of the hostages depends on the life of the shah, because the main purpose in this process was an actual statement on the crimes of the government in the United States in relation to Iran, especially in the last 25 years."

When one correspondent suggested that American diplomat [as received] said to have participated in espionage should be treated in the same way as a Soviet diplomat who was expelled from Iran for alleged spying this week, Dr Beheshti said:

"It wasn't necessary to have a trial for the policy of Russia in Iran. Meanwhile, it was necessary to have such a trial for the policy of the Americans in Iran. Russia has not had the chance to colonise Iran as the United States has."

Dr Beheshti, holding his weekly press conference, also said the Majlis (parliament) would complete its procedural business in about two weeks and would then ask President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr to nominate a prime minister.

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The parliament, charged with deciding the future of the 53 hostages held in Iran for almost eight months, was inaugurated on May 28 but has since been bogged down in procedure, chiefly involving the formal accreditation of each member.

Parliament, in which the hard-line Islamic Republican Party is expected to play a dominant role, must approve both the president's nominee for prime minister and the government itself.

President Bani-Sadr has said that Revolutionary Council spokesman Hassan Habibi would take the post, "god-willing."

Dr Beheshti said the role of the council would be ended with the appointment of a government.

Asked when parliament would address the hostage issue, Dr Beheshti said: "It is not possible in this period of revolution to appoint an exact timing for everything."

Dr Beheshti's press conference followed a week in which revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni castigated the president and the Revolutionary Council and urged that all remnants of the shah's regime be erased.

To a correspondent who suggested that this was a sign of a power struggle in Iran, the clergyman said:

"I don't find any power struggle by us and our friends. I find that the revolution is basing (itself) on certain principles and we must take care of these principles...the difference of views should not be interpreted as a power struggle."

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IRAN

DAYS OF KHOMEYNI REGIME BELIEVED NUMBERED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 9 Jul 80 pp 10-11

[Article by Bechir Ben Yahmed: "A Primitive, a Genius..."]

[Text] It is my sad lot to announce the imminent demise of the Iranian revolution: it is doomed to die before our very eyes of its childhood diseases, and I do not believe anything can save it now. A lot of us believed in it, expected great things of it; we shall be left with the bitter taste of a great failure in our mouths, and before our eyes the sight of a great conflagration that will leave nothing behind it but a lot of ashes...

How could we, throughout 1978, but watch in admiration as this great people rose in wrath against so base a government? Or as, month after month, with no weapons save their bare hands, they returned again and again to the attack, like waves sped shoreward by a rising tide?

Their hands were empty, but their hearts were staunch as they faced down a political police force past numbering and the best-equipped army in the Third World. This people, all alone, toppled their evil government, scattered the unnumbered police to the winds, and brought the generals to their knees. That is how they won our admiration, almost in spite of ourselves.

The people who led that rising were little known, but they had long showed extraordinary perseverance and resolve, since for 30 long years they had steadfastly opposed that government. The leaders were in exile and had been working from outside the country, but inside it they had their acolytes: how can one help remembering Lenin in 1905 and in 1917?

Like him and his Bolsheviks, the Iranian insurgents were clad in the armor of an ideology both prideful and intolerant, which

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volunteered to fill a void so abysmal as to turn many of us dizzy. It claimed roots reaching far back into history and reaching as high as heaven. This is why that ideology angered some of us and enticed others, but left nobody indifferent. We were all eager to see what sort of edifice would emerge from it.

Actually, the architect, Khomeyni, piqued our curiosity, and this man of faith -- because of his age, his school of thought, and some of his sybilline utterances -- raised doubts in us. As for the masons and builders with whom he had surrounded himself and who in 16 months have yet to lay the first course of the wall, their babbling incoherence underscores their lack of practical know-how: they have trampled the ground and turned a spadeful of earth here and there, but they have built no wall...

Just think of it: since February 1979, when Khomeyni returned to Tehran, in close to a year and a half, they have indeed elected a president (who has no power) and a parliament whose role is perilously vague, under a constitution that is quite probably unworkable. But they have introduced not one single structural reform of which it might be said that it will change Iranian society, nothing that could be held up as an example or that anybody might call a revolutionary achievement. Nothing to justify the killings, the universities shut down, or the paralyzed economy.

In almost a year and a half they have done nothing -- absolutely nothing -- to help the country's fragile unity become less fragile. Quite the contrary: they have put it to such fearful stress that it hangs today by a thread. They have made no provision to defend their imperilled country and its revolution, unless you want to count the ragtag militia, quite undisciplined and of highly dubious efficacy, (wrongly) known as the "guardians of the revolution."

In the world outside, they have given the country and the new regime few friends and a great many enemies; at home, the forces which banded together to drive out the shah face each other down, month after month, never quite managing either to get together and work at the revolution or to resign themselves to allowing one force to prevail and impose its sway over the others....

In a year and a half few Iranian intellectuals, enthusiastic supporters of the new regime, have gone back home; a lot of them have left home.... At no time in that year and a half have the friends of the Iranian revolution who hoped it would succeed and who had their ears to the ground heard any serious

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talk of the future -- only about the shah and his crimes, about the United States and its misdeeds: about the past. When the American diplomats were taken hostage on 4 November last year, that action did not even turn out to be the unfortunate turning-point we thought it, nor yet what is called a "fuite en avant." The revolution was already sick and that act -- a "flight backward"? -- was part and parcel of that sickness.

From the very outset, though we see it only now, the Iranian revolution has been run by a clumsy, unskilled switchman -- who? -- who has run it onto a sidetrack. Once there, another bad shepherd -- who? -- halted it so as to expose with tireless vituperation the contradictions besetting Iran, without thus far even trying to sort them out. It has got into the habit of talking, not doing, and that brings us at the end of June 1980 to the dumbfounding spectacle you have surely read about: Khomeyni threatening to oust the president of the republic (!) and all his ministers if, within 10 days, the government's stationery, with the shah's coat of arms still on it, were not changed! Here you have the leader of a revolution who has never paid the least attention to government, exercised over the letterhead on government correspondence; and the fact that it had not occurred to anybody else, in 16 months, to change it is significant indeed. Less so than President Bani-Sadr's reply: "I have not picked a single minister, I have no authority over them, and I can hardly be held responsible for their failure to act..." His predecessor, if one may so call him, Mehdi Bazargan, complained of the same troubles in his admission of powerlessness: he spoke of himself simply as "a knife without a blade..."

Lenin, the professor of revolution, said it: you must take power in the entire state. That basic precept is loftily ignored by Khomeyni and his people: they think they can make do with power over minds, overlooking the fact that such power can last only if it is fed on daily deeds. The same goes for the sinew of the revolution -- money -- whose importance they neglect as they allow their oilfields and docks to deteriorate to the point where very shortly they will not be able to export enough crude oil to meet the financial needs of the country and the state. That is the day the United States (and the USSR) looks forward to, the day when, as they did with Mosaddeq in 1953, they can dictate own terms. Will Khomeyni come to as bad an end as did Mosaddeq? Is Iran doomed to play the role of the "crushed precursor?" I do not know.

Mehdi Bazargan, his former prime minister and perhaps the man who knows him best, voiced an opinion of Khomeyni that should have given us pause: "a rough and primitive (or elementary) man but, at the same time, a genius... I have never known any other man so skilled as he at expressing the mood or the will of the masses,

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at communicating with them through a glance, or through a few words spoken at a great distance... But he has no political experience: he has never been a general, for example, or run a business. He has no notion of administering a country or of the techniques involved. He does not understand what a government is...." Khomeyni's genius made the revolution possible: his lack of experience is in the process of making it fail.

That is doubtless what Hassan Nazih, who recently quit as head of the Iranian Petroleum Company (where he had been appointed last February with Khomeyni's approval), meant when he said: "When Khomeyni was in exile, he used to say: 'The shah must go!' When he came back to Iran, he said: 'The intellectuals must go, the generals must go, the lawyers must go, the leftist students must go, anybody for human rights must go!'"... Khomeyni was the bulldozer of the revolution. A bulldozer, though, is only good for demolishing old structures, not for building new ones. An Iranian friend who is equally perspicacious and whom the revolution's vicissitudes have not made lose his sense of humor, told me: "We keep on looking to Khomeyni, not because he is infallible -- fewer and fewer people still think so -- but because he has become inevitable and also, alas! impenetrable..."

"I would point out," my friend added, "that considering his age, the main thing is increasingly the people around him. The men around an old man in power are crucial... They assure the continuity of his thinking and his actions; they remember tomorrow what was decided yesterday... They make it their business to undermine any tiny islands of firmness still close to the old man. They are careful to ward off anybody whose influence they think might be harmful and, with the old man cut off from everybody else, they get what they want from him..."

And so what might have been a great revolution turns out, alas! to have been only a fine insurrection in which the genius who fomented it didn't know how (or didn't want) to be a revolutionary. I don't know whether or not Iran is still sick today of the shah, but I believe that what was to have been the Iranian revolution is just as sick as he is: doomed to deteriorate steadily until some soldier bestrides what is left of it. Unless, of course, somewhere in the region, not too far away, another great blaze rekindles the Iranian fire.

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IRAN

CLANDESTINE RADIO ATTACKS MOUNTED ON KHOMEYNI

LD281004 London THE FINANCIAL TIMES in English 28 Jun 80 p 2

[Dispatch from Tehran by Andrew Whitley]

[Text] A new weapon has gone into the armouries of the exiled Iranian opposition groups fighting Ayatollah Khomeyni's regime. It may be having an even more powerful effect than the exiles themselves had hoped.

The Ayatollah's opponents, learning the lesson of the February 1979 revolution which dislodged them, are turning to the airways to mount a frontal psychological attack aimed at undermining morale and paving the way for a military coup.

Within the past six weeks three clandestine radio stations have been set up to beam broadcasts in Persian into Iran assisted by neighbouring states which would be happy to see a change of regime in Tehran. Money is thought to come from further afield, including the United States and Israel.

They join already crowded wavebands. A longstanding clandestine station, the National Voice of Iran, has been transmitting for over 20 years from Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan and there are 15 other above-board radios broadcasting in Persian as part of established external services.

So great has been the interest generated by the new arrivals, with their fiery condemnations of the clerical regime and predictions of its imminent demise, that many discontented Iranians of my acquaintance switch from one station to another, then tape-record the "messages of hope" to replay to their friends.

Nor are the listeners confined to confirmed malcontents and Western-educated or orientated Iranians. In the bazaars and small shops of southern Tehran, as well as in provincial towns, transistor radios are tuned in every evening to the crackling stations calling themselves "the Free Voice of Iran," "Radio Iran" and "Radio Homeland."

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Two of the new clandestine radios can be clearly identified and almost certainly located. Radio Iran broadcasts on behalf of Dr Shahpur Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister, who now runs his campaign against the Mullahs from a Paris headquarters.

The Free Voice of Iran acts for Gen Gholam 'Ali Oveys," the "butcher of Tehran" as he was known in pre-revolution days, who heads the so-called liberation army of Iran.

Both their radios, which began transmitting within a few weeks of each other in May, are believed to be based in Iraq. The Bakhtiar camp claims that their transmitter is sited on the border with Iran, just inside Iraqi territory, although technical evidence suggests that a 100-kw transmitter, as they claim to possess, is more likely to be in Basra.

Almost certainly their rivals, who transmit coded messages to friends in the regular Iranian armed forces and give instructions to local cells to "watch your district's clergymen" in preparation for an uprising, transmit from Baghdad itself, using the facilities of the government radio.

Most interesting, and most shadowy of all, however, is Radio Homeland, which has been broadcasting to Iran for up to an hour every evening for the past six weeks or so.

Monitoring has disclosed little more than that it is vehemently anti-Khomeini and realises how much popular interest it can generate by broadcasting oldstyle Persian songs and poems to a people depressed for over a year by an austere diet of Islamic themes from what is now known as the "Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic."

Sufficient evidence is building up to point the finger at Cairo--where the exiled shah is living--as the place from which Radio Homeland broadcasts.

What is thought to be the same station also broadcasts these days as the "Radio of the Mujaheddin (Islamic guerrillas) of Afghanistan," giving heart to Afghan rebels of the same ideological persuasion as the Iranians whom their radio station-mate is trying hard to oust.

How deeply the Central Intelligence Agency is involved is unclear. Help could vary from financing the radio station to organising and running its nightly broadcasts, tuning its output to suit what the U.S. judges to be the extent to which the Khomeyni regime is disintegrating.

Other, much smaller clandestine radios operate within Iran. An aide of Dr Bakhtiar said yesterday that their supports have a mobile station within Tehran, moving physically and on the airways to evade detection. Other similar radios are known to exist in the Iranian Kurdish region in the west.

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Many still listen to the established foreign radios, in particular the BBC and Voice of America (which has raised its output to an enormous four hour a day), even if they are often dismissed by Iranians as tame in contrast with the exciting prospects held out by their more shady rivals.

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IRAN

QOTBZADEH REMARKS ON WARNING TO RUSSIANS REPORTED

LD100923 London THE TIMES in English 10 Jul 80 pp 1, 6

[Dispatch by Robert Fisk: "Iran Foreign Minister Accuses the Russians"]

[Text] Tehran, July 9--Mr Sadeq Qotbzadeh, the Iranian foreign minister, exudes a kind of sleepy confidence, a flair for easy discussion, and--when he stares at you--there is just a hint of the zealot in his eyes.

His years in the United States have bestowed on his English an American drawl, the perfect complement to his square, close-cropped head which makes him appear an Iranian version of a deep south Baptist businessman. His enemies hate him and there is a sign on the door of his anteroom politely requesting visitors to leave their guns outside.

The minister has no reason to fear assassination, but he is in more than one firing line. Just across the corridor you can see the two rooms in which the American charge d'affaires to Tehran has been residing since he lost his embassy last November. The newspapers on sale round the corner accuse the foreign minister of employing counter-revolutionaries, and just now the Soviet Politburo is probably saying some infinitely nastier things about him.

He disclosed nonchalantly this afternoon that he had given the Soviet Embassy in Tehran a one-month deadline to complete the reduction of its staff from about 40 to 15, and he spoke of "reports of intervention" by Iran's Tudeh Communist Party. "We cannot tolerate the engagement of Soviet diplomats in espionage activities. We have caught one of them already. We asked for his expulsion and he has gone."

Mr Qotbzadeh reserves his anger at the Soviet Union for a wider sphere. "The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan is not acceptable to us," he said. "We cannot tolerate it, especially because Afghanistan is a Muslim country and was a common frontier with us and its people are fighting against an aggressor.

"We were against the American military intervention in Vietnam and we think exactly the same way about the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

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It is exactly the same thing. The Soviet Union claims it has come to Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan Government. The Americans were in Vietnam at the 'request' of the Vietnamese Government.

"So, with our frankness, we obviously could not accept this kind of excuse--especially since the present authorities in Kabul had been brought in by the Soviet Union.

Mr Qotbzadeh expressed his hope that the Russians would withdraw from Afghanistan, which would help to restore "good neighbourly relations" with the Soviet Union, but he made it clear that he would like Iran to furnish arms to the Afghan guerrillas. There were between 500,000 and 600,000 Afghan refugees in Iran at present, he said, funded by the Iranian Government.

Would Iran give arms to the rebels if the Russians did not withdraw?
"I hope so, I hope so," he replied.

The minister is a shrewd and careful man, apparently speaking his mind with impetuosity but in reality weighing his words with caution. He said today that he did not want to be foreign minister in the new government--indeed, that he did not want any post in the new administration because he was "very tired"--so perhaps he can afford a little outspokenness. The recent executions in Iran have evidently disturbed him.

"The executions mostly involve members of the previous regime," he said. "But I believe that there should be a rather more elaborate process for the courts. The executions of those involved in drugs have increased recently..." There was a pause. Did Mr Qotbzadeh agree with this punishment?

"Not in the way it is being done," he said. "There has to be some due process of law to it. The execution of the women in Kerman (who were stoned to death) was condemned by many people here. Protests came from everyone. I myself deplored it, and said so to all those who were responsible."

Although Mr Qotbzadeh does not say as much, his own position gives him little room to shout too loudly about the apparent iniquities of Islamic justice. The Islamic Republican Party is putting it about that the Foreign Ministry has no interest in Islam and that its employees yearn for the days of the shah.

The ministry's women employees now all wear a scarf, but Mr Qotbzadeh, who looks more like a jet-setter than a revolutionary, knows he is the IRP's real target.

"My conscience is absolutely clear," he said. "This is not the first time that I have been under fire. They hoped they would break me and they have not been able to do that--and they will not be able to either."

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Mr Qotbzadeh's relationship with Ayatollah Khomeyni obviously acts as something of a safeguard. The two were together in Paris and still meet regularly. Today, the Ayatollah often appears angry at the bureaucracy of government ministers. Has he changed since those epic days when he returned to Iran to overthrow the Bakhtiar government?

"He is obviously very dissatisfied with the activities of the government and he is touched by the dissatisfaction of the people. He has a burden and a heavy responsibility now...but basically the man is as holy as he was, as honest as he has ever been..."

Mr Qotbzadeh seems unhappy when you ask him what will happen after the Ayatollah dies. The same after him," he said. "Actually I am afraid of what comes after. No one is going to have his stature and his greatness in this country. We have not seen anyone like him for the last thousand years, and I do not think we will see anyone like him for centuries to come."

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IRAN

KORDESTAN DESCRIBED AS IRAN'S VIETNAM

Paris AL-WATAN AL'-ARABI in Arabic 16-22 May 80 pp 43-45

[Article by 'Isam 'Abd-al-'Aziz: "Iran's Vietnam"]

[Text] God recognizes only one Iranian and some of his ayatollah and hojjat-oleslam followers: this is what the Iranian regime wants to say. Therefore, in its eyes there is nothing unlawful about F-4 airplanes and Chieftan tanks bombarding peaceful Kurdish towns because the rebels in the mountains have inflicted a devastating defeat on the Iranian convoys advancing towards the Iraqi borders. Sanandaj, the peaceable Kurdish town nestling in the arms of the mountains, has been transformed into a graveyard, with hundreds of unburied corpses scattered throughout its streets, roads and houses, and with thousands of wounded who cannot find medicine, treatment or doctors. What is the opinion of Islam and the Moslems?

The yellowed pages of the SHARAF NAMEH, which dates back to 1596 AD, tell a strange fable. One of the kings of old Persia, a tyrant named Zahhak, was afflicted with a strange disease, in which a viper sprouted from each shoulder. When the doctors were unable to cure him, he sought the advice of an old sorcerer, who advised him to kill two young men each morning in order to be cured. So he issued orders to his executioner to do so.

But the executioner took pity on the youths, and would kill only one of the pair, telling the other to flee. The fugitives who sought refuge in the mountains lost no time in assembling and banding together, to become what has been known since that time as the Kurdish people.

In this old legend, which is but part of ancient Kurdish mythology, the historical explanation for the constant clash between the Kurds and the Persians?

One thing certain is that there is a thread connecting the resistance by Kurds in Iran with repression over the course of time. It is also certain that this thread has at present become knotted around a single issue: that the Iranian Kurds gain autonomy, which would preserve their heritage and identity, and that the administration of their local affairs be left to them.

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But the Khomeyni regime does not see the Iranian Kurdish issue that way. The issue has suffered a number of reversals recently, definitely showing that the new regime is using it the same way it is using the American embassy hostages. After Khomeyni took power in February of last year, the controlling factor in the Kurdish issue became simply how much the Iranian people rallied around or parted company from its new leadership.

Last July, i.e. before the embassy incident, Khomeyni declared that the leaders of the Kurdish people were "Zionists, devils and agents." The "Revolutionary Guard" and the remnants of the Iranian army actually began advancing towards Kurdistan, in order to smash the Kurds' aspirations toward autonomy, which had clearly increased after the revolution.

But the situation changed in late November, that is, after Khomeyni put the Kurdish issue "on hold" so as to thoroughly exploit the American embassy situation, which has been invaded. Noticeable success was achieved in distracting the Iranians from increasingly critical problems, and thus the Imam announced his desire to negotiate with the "Zionist and satanic" Kurdish leaders who then became "possessed of good intentions."

Now, after the American embassy has lost its glitter and has become incapable of capturing the attention of the Iranians, the Revolutionary Guard and the Iranian army has returned to Kurdistan to carry out a series of massacres against the Kurds.

The Breathing Period Was Not Long

The Kurdish demands for autonomy are not in fact based on fragile foundations, for there are about 4 million Kurds in Iran, with their own language and culture. Also, the history of their struggle for autonomy extends back to the First World War, and it is a history in the course of which they have made thousands of sacrifices.

The Kurds' lengthy sufferings from the depraved Shah's suppression of their demand for autonomy led to a terrific wave of joy at the downfall of his regime, in the hope that the new regime, applying its own slogans, would grant them their right to express their national identity, especially since the collapse of the Shah's regime was accompanied by a total disintegration of the army and police apparatuses. Thus Kurdistan was transformed from a region under heavy guard by the Shah's agencies into a region practically devoid of any central agencies connected with the capital.

This, naturally, led to the Kurds' gaining the opportunity to self-administer their region in practice, according to their wishes. Some Kurds assumed this to be a permanent gain.

However, that did not prevent the Kurds from attacking what remained of the Iranian army's barracks in Kurdistan in February 1979, wiping them out, and seizing a large amount of arms and concealing them in inaccessible mountain hiding places, in consideration of the day they might need them.

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The new regime demonstrated its concern for the Kurdish issue, and sent a special delegation to study the nature of the Kurdish issue and inquire into the views of Kurdish leaders. Shortly after the delegation returned, the capital's response came in the form of the advance of army, airforce and Revolutionary Guard forces to Kurdistan. It had become clear to the new regime that the Kurds had become more insistent on autonomy than they had been before.

This took place in the midst of a tumultuous wave of mobilizing Farsi racist feelings against the Kurds. Khomeyni declared the "holy war" against the Kurds, canceled the Kurdish-language radio and television programs, and raised the slogan that Islam would unite the nation's races. Khomeyni offered this as an excuse for repressing the Kurdish people's aspirations, denying the distinction between Persians and Kurds, and finally and most importantly, keeping the Kurds under Farsi control without any breathing space for their national identity.

Reinforcing all of that was a long heritage of the Persians' treating the Kurds as objects of disdain and scorn, be it their flowing, colorful garments or their language or the Farsi rumors about their extreme backwardness. This emnity found a wide margin after Khomeyni's announcement that the rulings of the Shi'ite Ja'fari school would be the main source for legislation in the new republic, and after the announcement of the new draft constitution, which did not contain one clause about the rights of national minorities. On the contrary, its six articles dealt with prohibiting any threat to Iran in the name of freedom, which was directed right at the aspirations of national minorities for autonomy, even though the Kurdish leaders unanimously agreed that their demand was limited only to obtaining autonomy, not separation from Iran.

Last August, the Iranian army convoys reached the heights of Mahabad, which the Kurds consider a historic capital of their region. Teheran announced that the military operations against the Kurds would be commanded by the defense minister himself, while Shaykh 'Ezzeddin Hoseyni, a prominent Kurdish leader, announced that the Kurds were being massacred and that the movements of the army and the Revolutionary Guard were directed against all Iranian people. He stressed that the Kurds would fight on until they achieved autonomy.

Victims By the Hundreds

The bloodbaths began between the forces of the Khomeyni regime and the Kurdish Peshmerga militia which was defending Mahabad, Sanandaj and Saqqez. Phantom F-4 planes, Cobra helicopters and heavy artillery took part in bombarding Kurdish towns, killing hundreds of civilians.

After some violent battles, the Kurdish militia forces withdrew from the towns and took refuge in the mountains, in what was described as the start

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of guerrilla warfare against the Iranian army for the purpose of expanding the confrontation front, whereby the army forces would lose the advantage of the concentration gained during the operations to regain control over the towns.

After Army Brigades 28 and 64 took over the towns, Ayatollah Khalkhali was hastily summoned. It appears that Khalkhali was originally a butcher who lost his way and arrived at a judgeship in Khomeyni's Iran, since no sooner had he arrived in the Kurdish towns that he immediately began practicing his hobby by issuing orders for wholesale executions.

Khalkhali's trials, which usually last no more than 10 minutes, included, in addition to prisoners, a number of Kurds who were dragged from their beds at Mahabad Hospital and were executed by firing squad during the "victory" celebrations held by the young men of the Revolutionary Guard, during which military medals were exchanged.

But the Kurdish meat was bitter. The people of the village of Kamyaran attacked the Iranian military convoys after currying the road which passed near the village, and destroyed 13 Chieftan tanks. Radio Teheran, which persistently broadcast anti-Kurdish statements, interrupted its program to announce that a gang of Kurds had swooped down on the Revolutionary Guard position, "at which time a battle broke out in which a number of flowers of the Islamic revolution were martyred."

During the first week of September, the Kurdish militia attacked six Iranian army military positions and inflicted serious losses. The new regime realized that the Kurdish issue was more serious than it seemed, for the army soldiers had begun deserting in the field, while the Revolutionary Guard battalions clashed among themselves because of lack of coordination. Khomeyni tried to boost the morale of the fighters by issuing an appeal saying, "An increase in their efforts will please God and will increase their rewards in Paradise." He was, in fact, planning another tactical step.

A Resumption of Negotiations

In November, the Imam sent a statement to the Kurds in which he called for a resumption of negotiations, saying, "I am expressing my modest desire for that, as a servant of the nation passing the final days of his life."

At that time, it became clear that the military campaign had failed to achieve its immediate purpose, the elimination of the Kurdish resistance. But in fact, the regime had achieved an indirect end which it had always been looking for an excuse to accomplish: the remobilization and organization of the army through seeking the assistance of its old cadres from the time of the Shah, whom Khomeyni had described as being a "group of devils and satans." Nevertheless, the "devils" which returned to the regime's paradise met the evil of defeat in Kurdistan.

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Khomeyni issued his orders to the army and the Revolutionary Guard to withdraw from the Kurdish towns while retaining some positions outside them until further notice. The Kurdish leaders returned to those towns after having hidden in the mountains for no more than 3 months.

A Kurdish commission was sent to Teheran to negotiate, but the issue was finally solved in a manner not in the interest of the new regime. Even though Teheran had announced that the negotiations had resulted in "complete agreement" between the two viewpoints, the Kurdish commission denied that any agreement had been reached, and one of its members said, "What was placed before us was a copy of the conditions which Imam Khomeyni had drawn up before."

Khomeyni's conditions were the Kurds' surrendering their arms in return for complete amnesty and absolute freedom of the press, but also the dissolution of Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) formations led by 'Abdorrahman Qasemlu, which constituted the largest bloc in the Kurdish armed militia.

When the Iranians turned their attention to the spectacle of the American embassy "circus" in November, Teheran decided to freeze the situation on the Kurdish front for a while. However, the situation remained tense in Kurdistan, which refused to hand over its arms in spite of the "persuasion" trips made by a number of "ayatollahs" to the region, because, as one Kurd said, "They are hiding M-47 tanks in their cloaks, and they are treating us as if we were defeated."

After the lights around the American embassy situation died out, Teheran decided to reopen the Kurdish front around Sanandaj this time, the largest Kurdish town. At the end of April, General Falahi, the commander of the Iranian land forces, sent a warning to the Kurdish militia in the town to hand over their weapons no later than 25 April, or else the town would be subjected to an all-out military attack.

In another context, the timing of the new campaign had another connotation connected with strengthening the position of Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, whose enemies accused him of being incapable of taking any decisive step to confront increasing opposition from minorities.

In addition to that, the concentration of forces along the Iraqi borders was necessitated in order to rid the region of any local opposition, especially since the Kurds were holding firm so that the army or Revolutionary Guard forces would not trample the territory of the Kurdish towns as one of their basic conditions.

Renewed Fighting

A spokesman for the Kurdish militia replied to Falahi's threats by saying, "We will not surrender our arms, and we will fight to defend our existence."

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Thus the army's heavy weaponry began shelling the two towns of Sanandaj and Saqqez, which resulted in the death of 120 civilians, in addition to the wounding of several hundred. It was said that only 30 militia members were killed, the rest being civilians. The shelling of the Sanandaj hospital was one reason for the increased number of victims who could not be aided.

But the basic loss was sustained by the Iranian army in the actual field of battle outside the town, for whom the Iranian military convoy would move along the mountain road connecting Saqqez and Sanandaj, it would be exposed to an ambush set up by the Kurds which led to the halting of the entire column.

During the first week of May 1980, reports came out of Sanandaj about the possible spread of epidemics because of the Kurdish corpses rotting in the streets, and because the Iranian army had cut off food supplies to both Sanandaj and Saqqez.

On 4 May, Bani-Sadr announced that the Iranian government would fulfill only its promises to remove "irresponsible armed elements." Bani-Sadr made this announcement out of his determination to put an end to the Kurdish issue by force of arms. But military observers feel that this would be impossible, either because of the concentration of Kurdish arms or because the Kurds' pursuit of guerrilla warfare in mountainous regions makes it hard for the regular army to wage a traditional war. This makes the army vent its anger on the Kurdish towns, since they can't reach the mountains.

A Kurdish mother summed up what is happening by telling a journalist, "For God's sake do something to stop this war. I don't know what the Kurds did to be slaughtered in this manner."

An inquiry into the bloodbaths in Kurdistan is now clearing up several outstanding facts. The complication of the situation at the American embassy after the all-out American military operation, in addition to the bloody confrontation which took place in April at Iranian universities between the Islamic and Marxist left and the Revolutionary Guard, has resulted in an enhancement of the power of Ayatollah Beheshti and the leaders of the Islamic Republican Party. At the end of April, Bani-Sadr announced a unilateral ceasefire, but the Revolutionary Guard, connected with the party and the Revolutionary Council, announced that it would not agree to this truce and that it would continue fighting until the Kurdish resistance was totally smashed. Bani-Sadr was forced to go back on his stand and issue orders to the army to shell Kurdish towns.

If this bloody conduct of the Iranian regime continues, which would be the most likely eventuality if the Islamic Republican Party gains a majority in the new parliament as expected, the results will not be as destructive to the Kurds as they would be to the ruling regime in Iran.

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In the midst of this chaos and instability, Iranian Kurdistan would be transformed into an Iranian Vietnam. This means that the Iranian army would once again become threatened with dissolution under the influence of the heated confrontation with the Kurds. Similarly, Iran's domestic problems, which Bani-Sadr himself does not deny, will not be solved by shelling Kurdish towns, but will simply become more aggravated.

'Ezzeddin Hoseyni, the Kurds' Ho Chi Minh

Two prominent leaders occupy the greatest area in the Kurdish leadership in Iran. The first is Shaykh 'Ezzeddin Hoseyni, who is almost 60 years old. He does not rely on a specific political organization, but enjoys the loyalty of the prevailing majority of Iranian Kurds.

Shaykh 'Ezzeddin says, "We shouldn't look at politics from a religious point of view, for there are some things which do not enter into religion." Shaykh 'Ezzeddin approves the establishment of a socialist system in Kurdistan, emphasizing that God would be pleased with this system, which would not give a privileged minority the right to exploit the majority.

As for the other leader, he is 'Abdorrahman Qasemlu, secretary general of the KDP, who leads the Peshmerga, the armed Kurdish militia. Qasemlu spent long years in exile during the Shah's reign. He demands the application of a special type of socialism suited to Kurdistan's conditions.

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IRAN

OIL MINISTER ANNOUNCES INCREASED CRUDE EXPORTS

LD071611 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 7 Jul 80 p 2

[Dispatch by Patrick Cockburn: "Iran To Double Oil Exports to Bulgaria"]

[Text] Tehran--Bulgaria will double its imports of Iranian oil to about 40,000 barrels a day under a six-month agreement signed yesterday.

Iran has been striving to increase its exports of oil in the second half of the year. Mr. Ali Akbar Moinefar, the oil minister, said over the weekend that exports of crude this month would increase by 25 percent to about 1m b/d.

New agreements have already been reached with independent Spanish oil companies and Turkey which would account for most of the increase in exports.

Romania is currently renegotiating a renewal of its contract for the first six months of the year, which is thought to be for about 45,000 b/d. This is almost all paid for at the official Iranian price, but includes a small clearing agreement, according to the diplomats.

The Romanians announced on Friday that an agricultural aid agreement had been reached with Iran. Romania is already supplying a range of farm products including 12,000 tonnes of beef this year.

The key to a major increase in Iranian oil exports is still the consortium of Japanese companies which used to make 510,000 b/d. They withdrew in April when Iran increased the price of its crude. The Japanese now feel less worried about the price of Iranian oil since the producers have raised their prices.

Faced with strong U.S. pressure not to buy, the Japanese are likely to negotiate to maintain their place in the queue of potential purchasers rather than with the firm intention of reaching an agreement.

Meanwhile two British journalists, Miss Christina Powell and Mr. Roger Cooper, were released by the Iranians yesterday after agreeing to leave the country within 48 hours.

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The two had been held for 17 hours after being detained by officials in plain clothes on Saturday. They said yesterday they did not know which authorities had detained them. They were interrogated separately but did not know why they were arrested.

In another move against the foreign press, President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr has asked the revolutionary prosecutor general to close the office of the French News Agency, AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, in Tehran and to expel its correspondents.

The president's office alleges that the text of an interview given by Mr. Bani-Sadr and published in LE MONDE was distorted by AFP.

It has been announced that all women employed by the Iranian Government will have to wear an Islamic uniform devised by the Revolutionary Council.

This will include some form of hejjab (head scarf) but not necessarily the chador (long black cloak).

Over 2,000 women demonstrated against the new dress regulations on Saturday.

Saturday's demonstration has been bitterly attacked in the press. The ISLAMIC REPUBLIC DAILY, which is controlled by the clerical Islamic Republican Party, asked its readers to identify women taking part.

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IRAN

OIL INDUSTRY SPARE PARTS BOUGHT DESPITE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

LD171015 London THE FINANCIAL TIMES in English 17 Jul 80 p 40

[Report by Simon Henderson: "Iran 63 Million Pound Order Beats U.S. Sanctions"]

[Text] Iran is buying spare parts for its oil industry worth \$150M (63.3 million pounds sterling) a year through a London-based purchasing organisation, despite U.S. economic sanctions intended to force it to release the Tehran hostages.

Curiously, the non-profit making organisation, Iranian Oil Services (IROS), is still legally owned by the consortium of Western oil companies, including 11 U.S. companies, which produced most of Iran's oil before last year's revolution.

In theory, its operations do not infringe U.S. sanctions. The British legislation allows supply contracts to be extended, and one of the U.S. companies said yesterday that as minority shareholders they could only ensure that no U.S. equipment was supplied.

At present British Petroleum has 40 per cent of IROS, Royal Dutch-Shell 14 per cent and Compagnie Francaise des Petroles 6 per cent. Of the U.S. companies, Exxon, Gulf, Mobil, Socal and Texaco each has 7 per cent, and the remaining 5 per cent is shared between Atlantic Richfield, American Independent, Getty, Charter, Conoco and Standard Oil of Ohio.

The fact that Iran still depends on the consortium to provide spare parts for its vital oil industry is clearly an embarrassment to the revolutionary authorities. Talks were attempted a year ago to sort out its ownership but failed, apparently because nobody in Tehran was prepared to take the necessary decision.

On the U.S. companies' side, the continuing legal relationship is also probably embarrassing in the light of sanctions but worth continuing as a bargaining lever for outstanding claims against Iran, which nationalised the Western-owned producing arm of the consortium.

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Until the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, U.S.-made goods were estimated to form only 25 percent of IROS sales. In most cases these can be obtained from other suppliers. British companies meet an estimated 35 per cent of the orders and Japan 15 per cent, while most of the remainder are met by other West European countries.

IROS' role means present assumptions about the state of Iran's oil industry may need to be revised. Industry experts say there is no particular shortage of spares, and that present Iranian production of 1.5M barrels a day could easily be doubled.

Instead, low production is blamed on Iranian pricing policy which, at an effective level of \$35 a barrel since April, still makes Iran's oil more expensive than comparable crudes.

A role for the Soviet Union as a supplier of spare parts or experts is also discounted. It is thought the Iranians first explored the possibility this year, before the scope of the EEC sanctions then proposed against Iran was clear.

Despite continuing sabotage of pipelines, blamed on Iraqi-backed local Arab separatists, IROS has not been asked to supply pipe. It is assumed there are still adequate stocks in Iran, or that the major pipe mill at Ahwaz can produce what is required.

Industry experts consider the National Iranian Oil Corporation capable of running production and maintenance operations, areas which have long been staffed by Iranians.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

AFGHAN REBEL BASE DENIED--Tehran, June 26, REUTER--A Foreign Ministry spokesman today denied Soviet charges that Iran was allowing Afghan rebels to operate from a base in northeast Iran against Soviet and Kabul government forces in Afghanistan. The Soviet Communist Party daily PRAVDA said yesterday that a "large regional centre of armed struggle against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" had been set up in the city of Mashhad. The spokesman said: "Such a report is categorically denied," and added: "Maybe they (the Russians) wanted to interfere in Iran in the future." The Islamic movement of Afghanistan, which sympathises with the rebels, has an office in Mashhad, but the Tehran government has always denied that there is any Afghan military base in Iran or that it is giving military aid to the insurgents. [Text] [JN260928 London REUTER in English 0919 GMT 26 Jun 80]

RAPE CHARGES AGAINST U.S. HOSTAGE--Tehran, June 30, REUTER--A Justice Ministry investigator said today one of the American hostages from the U.S. Embassy would be prosecuted for the alleged rape of an Iranian woman unless her parents forgave him. The investigator, Ali Akbar Parvaneh, told REUTER a request for forgiveness would involve the parents of the hostage, who is a marine sergeant, coming to Iran and meeting the mother and father of the woman, identified only as Azem A., aged 23. Mr Parvaneh said that any prosecution would go ahead whether or not the Iranian parliament decided to free the hostages. The woman was found strangled on March 27 in an alley near the occupied U.S. Embassy. Her brother told police he had killed her to protect his family's honour because he believed she was pregnant by the marine, Michael Moeller, 28. Medical tests confirmed that she was pregnant. Mr Parvaneh said today: "We will not try Moeller if the parents of the girl he seduced forgive him. If Moeller's parents come to Iran and convince the dead girl's parents to drop the action against Moeller, then Iranian law allows for the prosecution to be dropped." [Text] [JN302112 London REUTER in English 2103 GMT 30 Jun 80]

GENERAL BAGHERI ARREST DENIED--Tehran, 12 Jul, (REUTER)--President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr's office today denied Tehran press reports that a former air force commander had been arrested in connection with an alleged coup

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conspiracy made public last Thursday. The reports, naming General Amir Bahman Bagheri, who resigned his air force post a few weeks ago, were carried in the Tehran dailies ISLAMIC REPUBLIC and AZADEGAN. An official in President Bani-Sadr's office, Reza Taghavi, categorically denied that General Bagheri had been arrested when asked by REUTER for confirmation. President Bani-Sadr, in a newspaper interview on July 3, denied a report broadcast by the Voice of America Radio Service that General Bagheri had fled the country in an air force phantom jet. He accused the U.S. of trying to sow discord in the wake of what he called an unsuccessful economic blockade of Iran and last April's abortive attempt to rescue the American hostages held since last November. [Text] [JN120802 London REUTER in English 0756 GMT 12 Jul 80]

HOSTAGES' RELEASE REJECTED--Tehran, July 11, REUTER--One of the militants occupying the American Embassy in Tehran rejected tonight any suggestion that additional hostages might be freed following the release on medical grounds of U.S. Vice-Consul Richard Queen. The militant also said that Mr Queen, who was flown to Zurich today had suffered a recurrence of an ailment that afflicted him before the embassy take-over last November. In a telephone interview, a member of the student council in control of the embassy said Mr Queen's release was based on purely humanitarian considerations and not due to lack of adequate medical facilities in Iran. Asked if any of the remaining 52 hostages might be allowed to go free, he replied: "Certainly not." The militant declined to be identified. [Text] [JN111808 London REUTER in English 1803 GMT 11 Jul 80]

BAKHTIAR PRAISES CONSPIRACY MEMBERS--Paris, July 11, REUTER--Former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar praised today the "courage and determination" of members of a conspiracy which the Tehran government said last night was aimed at returning him to power. Referring to reports from Tehran that some of the conspirators had been killed, Mr Bakhtiar, the deposed shah's last prime minister, said in a statement he deplored "human losses which occurred during this attempt." Without clearly accepting responsibility for the plot, Mr Bakhtiar, who lives here in exile, said that in view of the situation in Iran, "it is natural for elements favoring the establishment of democracy to try to take the law into their own hands without necessarily being directly linked with (?nationalist) groups which act (?from abroad)." [Text] [JN111521 London REUTER in English 1457 GMT 11 Jul 80]

QUICK HOSTAGE RELEASE REQUESTED--Tehran, July 16, REUTER--A senior Iranian clergyman today called for a quick release of the 52 American hostages held by militant students since November 4. In an interview with ETTELA'AT newspaper, Sheykh 'Ali Teherani, a member of the Assembly of Experts which approved the Islamic Constitution, said: "I believe the hostages should be [few words indistinct] as possible." Sheykh Teherani said he was against a trial of the hostages because such a trial would not achieve anything for Iran. But he said the release of the captives should not be unconditional and that the United States should free frozen Iranian assets in return. [Text] [PA162130 London REUTER in English 2105 GMT 16 Jul 80]

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BRITONS ORDERED TO LEAVE--Tehran, July 6, REUTER--Two Britons said today they had been told to leave Iran within 48 hours after they were detained overnight by unidentified authorities. Journalists Christine Powell and Roger Cooper, both 45, spent about 17 hours in custody after being picked up last night by plain clothes officials. Miss Powell, an accredited correspondent, and Mr Cooper, a Persian scholar, went to the British Embassy soon after their release. They told REUTERS they did not know which authorities had detained them. Earlier, the presidential office and the Foreign Ministry said the two Britons were safe but declined to say where they were being held. Miss Powell, who works for Australian radio, has lived in Iran for 6 years. Mr Cooper, who has lived here off and on for many years, is an expert on Persian literature. They said they were interrogated separately but did not know why they were arrested. They were not ill-treated, they said. In May, Nick Cumming-Bruce, a British free-lance journalist, was arrested and told to leave Iran after being detained. [Text] [JN061627 London REUTER in English 1620 GMT 6 Jul 80]

STUDENT CITED ON HOSTAGES--Tehran, June 28, REUTER--Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni and the Iranian parliament would decide the future of the American hostages if the deposed shah died, one of the hostages' student captors said here today. The student, who said he was not speaking as an official spokesman for his colleagues, was commenting on reports from Cairo which said the former shah was seriously ill. If the deposed shah dies, (President) Carter is going "to be blamed, and any new decision will have to be made by the Imam (Ayatollah Khomeyni) and Islamic Majlis (parliament)," the student told REUTER. "The return of the shah is in the hands of Carter. If the shah is not returned to Iran either Carter is purposely stopping it or preparing the grounds for his death. In any case what we have always said remains--that the hostages must be tried," the student said. Ayatollah Khomeyni has said the future of the 53 Americans held hostages in Tehran since last November should be decided by the parliament. [Text] [JN281819 London REUTER in English 1805 GMT 28 Jun 80]

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MAURITANIA

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC FUTURE IN REGIONAL CONTEXT NOTED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 4 Jul 80 pp 1685-1688

[Article by Jacques Latremoliere: "Mauritania's Present and Future"]

[Text] The principle of self-determination, supported by the United Nations and the OAU for the Western Sahara is related to that of the intangible nature of colonial borders which the acceptance of the interested populations alone, whatever their situation might have been prior to the colonization, makes its requestioning possible. We understand the hesitation of the African leaders to disturb, even though lightly, a political structure which is as fragile as a house made of cards. However, this reverence for borders established by those who invented them as warranted by circumstances and their own interests, in which actually, they did not hesitate to change on the basis of agreements or the pressure of arms, frequently appears to be stranger by the fact that the concept of political frontiers is still largely alien to Africa.

Should we be surprised? This concept, in fact, established itself in Europe only at the end of the 18th century, at the same time as that of the sovereign people. In Africa where, in colonial times, there were only a small number of independent countries, and where the life of the Sahel and Sahara populations was conditioned by a nomad existence, the jus loci had no chance whatever to establish itself. Blood ties, language, and, above all, the fact of having lived, traded, and fought together, occasionally even one against another, constituted, to a far greater extent than a state tradition, mostly absent, the real bond for the affinities which we find today, paradoxically, to be at the origins of most inter-African conflicts.

It is in this sense that we could speak of a Comoro or Somali unity and that the claim filed by King Hassan II in 1975 with the International Court in The Hague seemed justifiable. Let us note, in passing, that the answer of the court would have been less ambiguous, had the pretender Ma-el-Ainine, who had left Smara at the turn of the century, to overthrow the Alaoui dynasty, which he was prevented from accomplishing by a handful of French officers, had succeeded. The population would

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have been the same but no one would have thought of contesting the "Moroccan nature" of the Atlantic Coast, from Tarfaya to Cape Blanc, or even, reaching for extremes, the "Saharan" nature of the Moroccan Coast from Melilla to Tarfaya.

It was the unopportune decision to materialize intangible human affinities that caused the fall in 1978 of President Moktar Ould Daddah, and the difficulties faced by his successors to protect the State of Mauritania from battles and, following the August 1979 Algiers Agreement, to preserve its neutrality in a conflict which, let us admit it, intimately affects 7 of the 10 Mauritanian Arab-Berber factions. It is obvious that numerous affinities exist between these factions and the Saharaouis, some 75,000 strong according to the last Spanish census. They are more debatable between the Saharaouis and the Moroccans of Draa and Tafilelt, and seem to be even less so with the Algerians. The latter, actually, are not part of the Western Sahara heritage, being content to promote a democratic republic whose armed operations they support and behind which they conceal, in addition to possible economic conditions, their will to oppose any hegemony in the Sahara.

Libya is even less involved. Its interest in the matter was manifested until then in terms of weapons deliveries only. This does not fail occasionally to annoy Algeria. After all, it is of a mystical and prophetic kind, reflecting the image of the Libyan president, even though the latter claims to have traced his Requibat ancestry through his maternal line.

In this context, a return to the intangible nature of colonial borders, after their establishment, does not seem to be of a kind truly to stabilize the situation. Having acknowledged its weakness by withdrawing from the tripartite battle, Mauritania risks to pay for it by the more or less rapid absorption by one of the two remaining parties to the fight. The illogical nature of the territorial boundaries of the former Spanish colony becomes clear on the military level, making Morocco withdraw its troops, in the Mauritanian north, from Bir-Moghrein, from where they controlled the El Aioun road, and forcing Nouakchott to maintain, despite its neutrality and for obvious security reasons, a garrison in La Guera which commands, on the other side of the border, the land access to Nouadhibou. It is improbable that this demarcation would appear more logical in the field of peaceful activities--extraction of iron ore or phosphate--compared with a war.

Yet, it is this target of statu quo ante that is the official purpose of the Mauritanian government whose desire to maintain a balance and a state of independence was clear until last March but which, since then, seems to have been somewhat diluted as the result of the growing pressures of the Polisario Front. Under the influence of Major Jeddou Ould Salek, who was overthrown in 1979 and who has since died as a result of an accident, Lt Col Mustafa Ould Salek, who became head of state as a

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result of the July 1978 events, seemed to come closer to Algeria and the Sahraouis insurgents in order to withdraw from the Moroccan alliance. In the spring of 1979 Lt Col Ahmed Ould Bouceif, assuming the functions of prime minister, turned relations back toward Morocco. Following his death on 31 May 1979 as a result of an airplane crash, he was replaced by Lt Col Mohamed Ould Haidalla who has also acted as chief of state starting with January 1980.

The leanings of Col Haidella have been a subject of a number of questions. He is credited with being able to make peace with the Polisario Front, as a result of the Algiers 5 August 1979 Agreement, without, however, having kept the promise to surrender to it, at the beginning of 1980, the Tiris el Gharbia, the southern part of former Spanish Sahara, rebaptised Oued ed Dahab by the Moroccan forces which occupied it immediately following the Algiers Agreement.

Without mortgaging the future by officially recognizing the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SDAR), Lt Col Haidella removed from power the remaining pro-Moroccan elements, the others having gone to Rabat, where they founded the "free officers" group which has since become the Alliance for a Democratic Mauritania. At the same time, with uneven success, he has tried to eliminate from his government those among his collaborators reputed to be too favorable to the Polisario. It is true that their appointment to positions of territorial command did not take place in order to neutralize their influence. Furthermore, the sympathies of his Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Ould Zamel fall along the line of his Requistat relation, i.e., they hardly leave any doubt.

The Mauritanian chief of state thus hopes to "hold on" until the eventual negotiations of a peace treaty which would bring together the various involved parties and which he would attend with the label of uncontested neutrality, whose credibility he is trying to strengthen by diversifying his partners in the area of military cooperation to the benefit of Iraq, for example. In this spirit he triggered the departure of the Jaguars and the recall of a small contingent of French paratroopers who had settled in Noudhibou at his request, reducing from 60 to 45 our technical assistance personnel within the Mauritanian army.

He would also like the profit from this respite to improve the economy of the south which has been worsened by several years of drought in the south and by the decline in profits from iron ore mining in the north. Trying to deal tactfully with Morocco, which owns shares in the SNIM (National Industrial and Mining Company), and is interested in the future development of the Guelb el Rhein, and Algeria, whose supplies make possible the operation of the Nouadhibou Refinery, without abandoning the financial and political support still granted by the Arab petroleum producing companies, the Mauritanian chief of state is thus navigating by eye, more or less well, locked within contradictions to which he seems resigned, with a certain fatalism, to an ever growing extent.

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Improved Management

The war greatly contributed to the downfall of the Mauritanian economy as a result of the expenditures it entailed--about three billion ouguiya (the ouguiya or UM = 0.10 French francs) per year, starting with 1975, or 15 million CFA, not to speak of nonbudgeted outside support. The worsening of the economy was due, above all, to administrative disorganization, and the consequent lack of all dynamism and lack of continuity in the study and pursuit of development projects. What made these effects worse was that no search for new resources was made to compensate for the related economic misfortunes.

The first among them is the food shortage, chronic essentially, but worsened by several years of drought. In this respect the years 1973 and 1974 marked the peak, justifying an annual aid in food totaling about 100,000 tons for a 1.6 million population. Reduced to 30,000 tons in 1975 and 1976, it had to be raised to 60,000 tons in 1977 and 1978 and has been kept at that approximate level since. The 1979 harvest of millet, sorghum, and rice, totaling 47,000 tons, and meeting no more than one-quarter of the needs of the population, the balance must be found mostly overseas, since the neighboring countries themselves are experiencing shortages.

The other weak point of the economy is the drop of iron ore exports. The output of the Kedia d'Idjil peaked with 11.7 million tons in 1974. It has been gradually declining since, dropping to 7.4 million tons in 1978, but rising as of 1979. Reflecting the effect of the world metallurgical crisis, mineral exports have dropped both in terms of tonnage and value: 5.7 billion UM, corresponding to 8.4 million tons, were earned in 1977, as against 4.2 billion UM for 6.4 million tons in 1978, more than one-third of which purchased by France and two-thirds by the members of the European Economic Community. The overall amount of exports will be further affected by the total stoppage, as of May 1978, of Akjoujt Copper which, after having earned 1,628,000,000 UM in 1974, brought only 273 million in 1978. Even though encouraging, gypsum production obviously cannot compensate for this drop in mineral resources which account for approximately 80 percent of Mauritania's sales abroad.

These troubles were translated, on a global scale, in the foreign trade balance, through a growing deficit: 3.2 billion UM in 1975, 4 billion in 1976, 6.2 billion in 1977, and 8.1 billion in 1978, representing one-third of the GNP, the food deficit alone accounting for nearly 3 billion UM. Import expenditures had been covered by exports to the 97.5 percent level in 1973 and 1974. In 1977 exports covered only 67 percent of the cost of imports. The figure dropped to 40 percent in 1978. This precarious ratio explains the cost of servicing the foreign debt in terms of exports, which equalled 42 percent in 1976, and which, today, seems to have stabilized in the vicinity of the 33 percent level. The relative abundance of influx of monetary capital and one-directional transfers, however, make it possible to reestablish more or less the equilibrium on

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the level of the balance of payments: + 0.4 billion UM in 1976,
- 2.2 billion in 1977, and - 0.8 billion in 1978.

Mauritanian Balance of Payments
(in billion ouguiya)

	1976	1977	1978
Imports FOB	12.2	13.3	13.6
Exports CAF	8.1	7.1	5.5
Balance of trade	- 4.1	- 6.1	- 8.1
Balance of goods and services	- 9.2	- 9.9	- 9.2
Unidirectional transfers	+ 5.4	+ 4.6	+ 6.0
Balance of current operations	- 3.8	- 5.3	- 3.2
Monetary capital	+ 4.2	+ 3.1	+ 4.0
Balance	+ 0.4	- 2.2	- 0.8

The financial condition of the state is a reflection of the state of the national economy. The 1978 budget deficit, which totaled 5.4 billion UM, could not be covered by foreign subsidies, including those of Saudi Arabia, the countries of the Persian Gulf, and France (20 million French francs). Totaling 12.8 billion UM, starting with a basic amount of 10.7 billion, the 1979 budget showed an even greater deficit (6.9 billion), which seems to have been wiped off, this time, by a Libyan subsidy accounting for close to one-third of the amount, a lesser aid (10 million francs), an advance provided by the monetary fund, and payments made by Stabex, the balance having been financed by the Central Bank. By virtue of these factors the stability of the currency could cause nothing but worry, considering a negative net foreign holdings account (2.3 billion UM in June 1979), and 1.9 billion owed to the Central Bank.

It was in these conditions and with the help of a mission of French specialists that an improvement plan was formulated in Nouakchott at the end of 1979. The start was difficult, since the planned measures clashed with habits developed in the course of two years of absence of fiscal control and the slowness of the demobilization which, normally, should have covered 8,000 men but whose most visible effect, to this day, has been stopped in the draft. The draft budget of 1980, therefore, totaled 9.9 billion UM or a 7.5 percent reduction compared with 1979. Even though its structure may be debatable, since the law on finances ignored military expenditures and the road infrastructure totaling 2 billion UM, as a result of which, the budget deficit would probably reach 5 billion, the budget shows a real desire to reestablish order, with a revenue ranging from 4 to 6 billion and appreciable savings (600 million) in civilian expenditures.

Naturally, this effort will have to be doubled if a durable improvement is to be achieved along with a general restructuring: stabilization of

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farm prices, fiscal reform, reorganization or elimination of unprofitable publicly owned enterprises and, finally, adaptation to the needs of the productive sectors of an unnecessarily self-competitive banking infrastructure.

Development Projects

Assuming that inadequate management, aggravated by circumstances, partially explains the crisis experienced by the Mauritanian economy, the only way to come out of it would be through a positive effort aimed at increasing exports and eliminating losses resulting from food purchases. This is the purpose, on the one hand, of the mining operations at Guelb el Rhein, and the development of agriculture in the Senegal Valley, the Gorgol Noir and the Aftouts es Sehli, on the other, but not at the expense of other operations of the same nature but of lesser extent, covering a total of 50,000 irrigated hectares. As a third priority, the exceptional abundance of territorial waters should gradually make possible the development of a fishing industry which, unfortunately, has no local tradition and is left entirely to foreign fishing vessels.

The drop in the sales of iron ore is not exclusively the result of the world energy crisis but of the forthcoming development of the Kedia d'Idjil and Tazadit deposits which, despite a slight increase in output in 1979, will have to be abandoned by 1992, with the Guelb project taking over and, that same year, insuring the extraction of 12 million tons, which could be raised to 14 million by 1994 with the opening of a mine at Oum Arwagen. The Guelb reserves* are estimated to total 1 billion tons, 285 million tons of which at Guelb el Rhein, currently being financed together with the building of an ore concentration plant. The overall investment will total \$500 million, with \$42.7 million coming from SNIM self-financing, \$120 million from a capitalization increase subscribed by five of its foreign stockholders, and the balance coming from bank loans of which the Central Bank for Economic Cooperation, associated with French commercial banks, will account for \$50 million, two-fifths of which will be for equipment purchases.

The financing plan shows the priority party of Arab participation. This is an illustration of the practice of the trialog recently developed at the Nice Franco-African Conference. Let us also note the participation of the Moroccan BRPM (Mining Research and Participation Bureau), totaling \$20 million, in increasing the SNIM capitalization. Following the laborious draft of constituent documents for the operation and the conclusion of the loan agreements, a specific agreement remains to be concluded governing the management of foreign exchange stemming from SNIM activities, separating it from other Mauritanian projects. As of now, however, orders have already been placed based on self-finance resources.

* Arabic term meaning "heart" referring to ore nuggets.

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Guelb el Rhein Mining Exploitation Project
 Financial Plan
 (in million dollars)

1. SNIM self-financing.....	42.7
2. Increased capitalization subscribed by SNIM stockholders:	
Arab Mining Co. (Arab League).....	28
Islamic Development Bank.....	10
KFTAIC (Kuwait Mixed Economy Agency).....	40
Iraqi Group.....	22
BRPM (Morocco).....	20
Total 1 + 2	162.7
3. Bank loans:	
Saudi Fund.....	65
BIRD.....	60
France (CCCE and commercial banks).....	50
Kuwait Fund (public).....	45
Fades (Inter-Arab Economic Development Fund).....	20
European Investment Bank.....	30
Abou-Dhabi Fund.....	20
OCEF (Japan).....	16
BAD.....	12
OPEC Special Fund.....	5
Total bank loans.....	338
Grand total.....	500.7

We know that the cornerstone of the Diama Dam, whose completion is scheduled for 1983, was laid on 10 December 1979 during a ceremony attended by the heads of state of Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania. Assuming that no financing difficulties will occur, its initial impact on agriculture is anticipated for 1985. The Gorgol Noir project will be financed by the European Development Fund and the FRG. It will cover 3,600 hectares and affect 4,640 families which will settle there between 1980 and 1985 as follows: 400 the first year and 800 each subsequent year, with technical aid currently being studied by the FAC.

Within the self-help program the USAID has allocated \$22,000 for the implementation of the 11 minor agricultural projects. The World Bank is financing a project of the same type. China took part in the development of the M'Pourie area by building pumping stations for the development of 1,424 hectares, 800 of which to be cultivated by private farmers, the balance going to state farms.

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Finally, the major Aftout es Sehli project, which will provide the irrigation of this lowland from the Senegal River to Nouakchott, behind the coastal area, is a long-term project whose feasibility study has already been completed by Sogreah for the FAC which had planned a loan of \$30 million over a 3 year period for the first part of the project. Iraqi aid may have been requested for this major project covering the development of 15,000 hectares. However, to this date it is unclear as to whether it will be used to replace French aid or cooperate with it.

The fauna of Mauritanian waters is exploited today only by 1,000 Spanish, Japanese, Russian, and Korean fishing boats which cannot be controlled for lack of material facilities. The 150 licenses issued for annual catches of 1.5 million tons, only 6,000 tons of which, are unloaded at Nouadhibou would account for 500 million UM of budget revenues.

This area could effectively become most immediately productive. It is natural that France is interested in cooperating in this area with a view to the development of a research center for the study of the fishing stock, involving the assignments to Mauritania of five Orstom researchers. Technical agreements could also be considered between the authorities and the Camaret and Douarnenez fishing companies to equip Mauritanian vessels with French lobster fishing facilities.

Foreign Aid and Peace

As we may see, the country is not short of foreign aid, ranging from the World Bank to Arab development funds, via all types of bilateral cooperation methods. France which remains the main financial source for development for the African states formerly belonging to its colonial empire, is witnessing here the fact that the 100 million francs which it gives Mauritania annually quite substantially outstripped, even though it may retain its priority in trade.

Yet, no one could ignore the fact that four-fifths of the foreign aid granted Mauritania comes directly through credit institutions from petroleum-producing countries in the Arab Peninsula, or Western countries with a liberal economy. No more than about one-fifth comes from Algeria, Libya, Iraq, or China, these four countries pursuing, actually, both abroad and domestically, different objectives.

In this respect, Mauritania does not doubt that an excessively long "phagocytage" of its political and administrative apparatus by the Polisario Front, in the revolutionary spirit of that organization, could deprive it of support which, so far, has been firm. This is clearly true in the case of Morocco but is also the case of Saudi Arabia which in 1979 did not display the same generosity as in 1978 in plugging the holes in the budget and which, together with Kuwait and Abou-Dhabi, tends to subordinate its aid to Rabat's approval.

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Could we say that such an attitude is shared by Western aid, French aid in particular? This is readily insinuated in Nouakchott which, specifically, attributes the minor apparent effect of a recent CNPF mission to the latent, even though silent, hostility of French investors to the options of Lt Col Haidalla in foreign policy matters.

The truth lies elsewhere. It would be normal for investments to dry out, to begin with, as the result of the excessive financial laxity which had developed in the management of public affairs favoring the hostilities. The nature of the financial efforts undertaken since 1979 are such as to attenuate this effect. However, the interest in Mauritanian development can be truly conceivable only within the framework of a peaceful foreign policy and, internally, respect for the rights of investors.

On the need for external peace the investors agree entirely with the Mauritanian leadership. However, the phagocytage to which we alluded should not end by imperceptibly drawing Mauritania into a conflict with its former ally. In this respect a gap still exists between the current situation, based on the cease-fire, and a real peace which would be joined by all the parties to the conflict.

Is this settlement imminent? Unfortunately, there is no sign to indicate it in the behavior of the opposing parties equally convinced of the justice of their cause. The lack of preparedness of the Moroccan troops for desert warfare, along with some tactical errors made at the time of their arrival in Western Sahara such as, for example, refusing the cooperation of some 5,000 mokhazni armed, outfitted, and trained by the Spanish, who hastened to organize, with Algerian help, the nucleus of the Polisario forces, led to Morocco's involvement in a murderous costly conflict which triggered a weariness which gradually annulled the effect of the enthusiastic support for the Moroccan sovereign generated in the course of the Green March among the Moroccan population.

On the Polisario side, an objective evaluation of the chances of a Sahara republic should convince its leaders that the war, whatever the exalting events may be for a people which has always considered war a great honor, is decimating, in the final account, the naturally very low personnel strength with foreigners slowly filling up the gaps made by the true children of the desert and that, on this basis, it might be opportune to provide the opponent with an honorable means to put an end to it.

The Sahraouis could then consider, together with a Mauritanian population which is not only closely related to them but is largely identical to them and have the natural advantages they lack, an economic development which the international aid agencies would have no reason to refuse. Would there be a "Polisariozation" of Mauritania or a "Moritanization" of the Polisario? The answer to this question would largely determine the preservation and future of the populations of the Western desert.

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FOOTNOTES

1. French technical assistance provides for 332 jobs, 202 of which in the field of teaching, corresponding to three-fifths of the subsidy. Scholarships total 3.3 million francs. In addition to the participation in fishing, as mentioned, together with the CCCE the FAC subsidizes, within the framework of exceptional aid to the Sahel, the development of small irrigated parcels, with the help of wells or pumping water from the river, with the development of livestock breeding and grazing, phytosanitation protection, and related non-irrigated crop growing.

Let us note among the various projects currently under study (a sugar refinery complex and private agriculture in the Teka region) the resumption and expansion of archeological digs in Tamchakett and Koumbi Saleh in which President Moktar Ould Daddah is very interested. Conducted jointly with the Mauritanian Institute for Historical Research, this operation has proved to be a model of constructive scientific cooperation.

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MAURITANIA

BANK ISSUES REPORT ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 4 Jul 80 p 1666

[Bank report: "Some Facts on Mauritania's Economic Situation"]

[Text] Following are some indications on the state of the Mauritanian economy taken from the report of activities for the 1979 fiscal year of the Mauritanian Bank Company, completing the study by Jacques Latremoliere.

The 1980 fiscal budget was based on the adopted austerity policy. It totals 9.9 billion ouguiya as against 10.7 billion in the 1979 budget, or a 7.26 percent reduction. Following is a comparison between the two budgets (in million ouguiya):

	1979	1980
Revenue:		
Direct taxes.....	1,464	1,529
Indirect taxes.....	747	902
Customs fees and levies.....	2,548	2,162
Fishing dues and fees.....	2,100	1,200
Various.....	700	650
Repayment of loans and advances	240	22
International aid.....	1,227	1,951
Loans.....	1,700	1,532
Total.....	10,726	9,948
Expenditures:		
Operational expenditures.....	8,443	8,237
Equipment and investment credits	1,433	1,282
Public debt.....	473	329
Loans and advances.....	250	30
Financial participations.....	127	70
Total.....	10,726	9,948

From the end of 1978 to the end of 1979 cash in circulation rose from 4.1 billion to 6.9 billion ouguiya. Bank deposits dropped from 1 billion to 0.9 billion ouguiya.

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Help to the economy totaled 9.4 billion ouguiya at the end of 1979 as against 8.9 billion the previous year, and advances allowed to the Mauritanian treasury totaled 1.4 billion ouguiya (+ 0.4 billion).

In 1979 the balance of trade worsened above all as a result of increased imports of consumer goods and equipment, despite increased iron ore exports. The deficit with France and the EEC members worsened. France remains the leading partner, accounting for 43.58 percent of imports and 27.89 percent of exports for 1979.

The overexploitation of Mauritanian fishing resources by foreign fishing fleets which paid the country ridiculously small fees led the government to formulate a new fishing policy. The new stipulations call for unloading, processing, and merchandising sea products by Mauritanian or mixed companies. On the fiscal level, the regulation calls for payments for fish exports.

At the end of May 1980 nine agreements were concluded with traditional partners (Dutch, Soviet, Romanian, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Korean, Nigerian, and French). Other agreements are being negotiated.

After four months of the new regulation, the amount of land investments totaled \$91 million and capital pledges totaled \$97 million (47.6 percent to the state, 2.9 percent to Mauritanian private interests, and 49.5 percent to foreign associates including Libyans, Iraqis, and Algerians). In 1980 fishing should contribute 332,000 tons, which is substantially below the maximum catch of 532,000 tons as estimated by the FAO.

The reorganization of the sea fishing sector, whose activities are currently concentrated in Nouadhibou, would increase the activities of the port of Nouakchott.

Overall financing totaling 37.2 million ouguiya was granted by the West African Economic Community (CEAO) for the development of agriculture.

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SYRIA

SYRIAN INTERNAL SITUATION ANALYZED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12-18 Jul 80 pp 28-31

[Article: "Is It Too Late to Save Syria?"]

[Text] Political violence has been renewed in Syria. This time it is spreading from north to south toward Damascus. The regime is meeting violence with violence, but how long can the regime continue to kill and be killed at the same time? Rif'at al-Asad, President Hafez al-Asad's younger brother, says that the regime is prepared to sacrifice a million casualties. The question now is, is there an alternative to violence and killing?

Damascus--In the past, they used to say that between one mosque and another in Damascus, there is yet a third mosque. Today, they say that between every intelligence building and another, there is yet a third building occupied by one of the numerous branches of this intricate security organization, upon which President al-Asad's regime depends as one means of continuity and survival.

These gloomy, well-guarded buildings, whose internal activities are not well-understood by the average citizen, and from which swarms of agents and mechanized patrols sally forth to cruise the streets and quarters night and day, are in the forefront of those disturbing things which trouble the Syrians' lives.

Despite this, Dr 'Abd al-Ru'uf al-Kasm, the current prime minister and former governor of Damascus, was able to introduce many beautifying touches to this ancient city, which is congested with more than two million persons, with public utilities adequate to serve only about a million.

The holes in the streets have disappeared, or nearly so. The communications crisis has subsided. Bus lines and stops have been revised in such a way as to relieve congestion in the streets. Traffic police have become

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more courteous in their dealings with citizens and drivers. There is a media campaign to encourage citizens to adhere to public hygiene practices and to throw their litter only into baskets, which the prime minister established for them when he was governor.

Syrians wish the professor of fine arts [al-Kasm] had stayed on as governor. If he had, he could have devoted more time for service in the field in which he could have effectively served his city. But now, they see him as near as can be to failure six months after he assumed the post of prime minister, incapable of achieving what he had promised on the day he rose from his municipal office to his high political position.

The administrative inefficiency is still unchanged. Pull is the way to deal with governmental organizations which are crammed with countless numbers of officials and civil servants, distributed fairly and unfairly throughout the ministries and public sector institutions.

Corruption has its protectors. It still manipulates influence in such a way that all the powers of Dr al-Kasm fail to control it.

The most important thing is that all the promises which the slender, cultured gentleman made to adhere to the sovereignty of the law, to open doors, and to alleviate the harshness of the repressive apparatus, have vanished with the large-scale campaign launched against the central and northern cities. The noise of military operations and accompanying excesses and brutalities--not to say individual or collective slaughter--has been heard by international organizations and assemblies and has been described in lengthy reports in the files of Amnesty International.

Lawyers Under the Thumb of the Regime

Dr al-Kasm has now stopped making promises, especially since the last promise he made to the council of the lawyers federation to respect the laws and to abolish state courts and emergency measures, has ended in dissolving lawyers' councils and violating their independence. Their president and most of their elected members have been thrown into jail or detention camps, and a number of lawyers and agents of the regime's apparatus have been appointed by governmental decree to replace them.

Perhaps the prime minister has now understood that his selection as prime minister was a ploy to conceal the large-scale campaign which was launched to combat the religious violence groups.

The third armored division was called up for this campaign. It is considered to be the cream of the shock troops upon which the regime relies. Also mobilized were defense squads especially trained on inner city fighting and on suppressing demonstrations and strikes, in cooperation with the dreaded security apparatus with all its power, expertise, resources and equipment, and its swarms of agents.

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After two months of campaigns involving searches, pursuits, sieges and clashes, the authorities concerned said that they have been able to break the back of the terrorism.

However, the calm did not last long. A new wave of violence broke out, represented principally by the murder of the government-appointed head of the Damascus branch of the lawyers' federation and the editor of the official magazine AL'URUBAH in Homs. This coincided with the daring release of some 10 detainees belonging to the religious violence groups, from one of the Damascus prisons.

The new wave of violence reached its peak when President al-Asad himself, on 26 June, was subjected to a precisely planned assassination attempt, from which he was saved by a miracle.

From this renewal of disorders, the observer can draw some conclusions and observations, chiefly the following:

1. The religious violence groups are better organized and entrenched in society and the government administration than was previously thought.
2. These groups meet with popular sympathy enabling them to operate freely.
3. These groups are easily capable of shifting their operations and activities to the middle of the country (Homs) and to the south (Damascus), leaving behind them in the north the security apparatus which had been moved there early this year, on the basis that it was the center of religious violence.
4. The measures of Dr al-Kasm's government to combat corruption, put an end to inefficiency, and restore respect for law have not achieved the desired goal, which is to eliminate popular discontent, and, subsequently, to remove the grounds used by the religious groups to continue their operations.

The Regime Steps Up its Measures of Revenge

With the renewal of the wave of violence, the authorities resorted to more severe counter-measures than its previous actions. Field military courts were formed to try those whom the government believed to be members of the "moslem Brotherhood." It decided to increase the punishment for belonging to this group to execution, and to abolish the easy entry procedures which foreigners had enjoyed.

A few days after the assassination attempt against his brother, President al-Asad, Col Rif'at al-Asad, who leads the hawks in the regime, threatened to liquidate the opposition at home and abroad, even if that meant "waging a hundred wars, destroying a million sanctuaries and sacrificing a million martyrs." He said that the long arm of the security apparatus "would get them, because it knows their whereabouts in the country, in the Arab world and abroad."

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According to the newspaper AL-BA'TH, the internal situation is now characterized by "increased fierceness of the conspiracy," and "continuation of the wave of crime and terror."

The newspaper says that the authorities are determined to "shift the battle to the nests of the conspiracy abroad, and to take vengeance upon the plotters and ringleaders," as well as against American and reactionary interests which "are not out of our reach." According to Col Rif'at al-Asad, the authorities are also determined to carry out a "sorting operation," to determine who stands with his brother and who stands "as a spectator, as a weakling, as an accessory or as an accomplice."

Thus, with regard to the renewal of religious violence, the regime has decided to respond in kind and meet violence with violence. It has decided to engage in increasing escalation, and to deal with citizens and with political and professional forces in terms of either black or white, i.e., "whoever is not with us is against us."

Some observers here say that they are not taking seriously the regime's threat to resort to "national screening." The evidence is that large numbers of merchants in the major cities have been granted import licenses, in spite of the large deficit in the balance of trade, in order to appease them and keep away from alliance with the "Moslem Brotherhood." This is happening at a time in which the government press is raising its radical tone after a long letup.

Has the Regime Reached an Impasse?

Most observers here do not deny that the regime is living in a crisis similar to that of Salah Jadid's regime (1966-1970), which became a captive of its revolutionary and radical slogans. As a result, the only domestic ally Jadid was left with was the Communist Party (Bakdash's wing), and his only foreign support was verbal encouragement from Moscow. Thus, when President al-Asad led his "corrective movement" in 1970, he did not have to move a single soldier.

This does not mean that President Hafiz al-Asad's regime lacks the power that Salah Jadid's regime did not have. However, circumstances are almost completely similar.

Domestically, Salah Jadid put himself in opposition to all the political and popular forces, from the far right to the far left, at a time when little by little he was losing his base in the armed forces upon which he depended. This ultimately made it easy for his allies to swoop down on him. The sole distinction between the two cases is that Salah Jadid's regime did not face the kind of dangerous wave of internal violence which al-Asad's regime is facing today.

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With regard to the Arab world, the radical Syrian regime has engaged in verbal battles with various Arab regimes, including Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt.

When President al-Asad began his rule by waving the olive branch at everyone, including Jordan which Syrian tanks had once invaded, he was able to revive the vital role which Syria used to play on the Arab stage.

The regime appeared to be more realistic and flexible with its modest slogans. The silent majority accepted the fact that a citizen from other than the majority sect in the country should assume the presidency, for the simple reason that he was able to give his fellow citizens a greater sense of stability and moderation.

Then came the October war. This was a golden opportunity which the regime was unable to exploit and benefit from in terms of raising its popularity. On the contrary, the regime rapidly dissipated whatever it had. It was a cruel shock when it found that its biggest ally and partner in the Arab arena, the Egyptian regime, had overnight joined hands with Israel and put all of its cards in the hands of the United States.

The embarrassment of the Syrian regime by its partner switching from a cautious approach to a peaceful settlement to an open, eager, and headlong rush to a unilateral solution, via Camp David, was accompanied by a series of decisions whose results were not accurately calculated. This increased the regime's difficulties and its isolation both internally and abroad.

If the Syrian involvement in Lebanon was unavoidable, as they say here, the intervention was done before Damascus had obtained commitments from all parties to strive to reach an agreed upon settlement within a definite time period. Thus, the Syrian intervention appeared as if it were to rescue the "Lebanese Front" at the expense of the nationalist and Palestinian forces. Then, Syria quickly became involved in taming the "Lebanese Front" without success.

The involvement reached the point of using the deterrent forces as local police to break up local disputes, along with accompanying excesses and abuses in a country which was emerging from a bloody civil war and which has extreme political sensitivities.

With regard to the Arab world, indecision, or, to put it more correctly, bad luck was evident. Agencies of the regime obstructed natural rapprochement with Iraq, which was the only way out of the dilemma. Instead, they sought to form an axis of "steadfastness and resistance," which included parties which were not dependable from a material or moral point of view, because of reasons connected with temperament, international ties, or geographic location. These factors prevented this axis from becoming a viable reality.

Beginning of Domestic Deterioration

The internal situation had become increasingly worse. The regime was afflicted with flabbiness. The national front had become a cardboard political facade for the ruling party after the regime had weakened it from within. The security apparatus suppressed every voice raised in criticism. In the absence of any vestige of freedom and democracy, even in its simplest forms, managerial corruption took hold in the government. Exploitation of influence spread terribly, and senior officials who were supposed to be symbols of honesty, sacrifice and self-denial were involved.

Perhaps we should record that a party official here told us that the security apparatus had been unable to accurately determine the identity and associations of those carrying out the acts of violence in the country a full year after the phenomenon had begun. Thus, some suspects were arrested on grounds that they were "agents of Iraq," and then were tried and executed on grounds that they were members of the "Moslem Brotherhood."

This is a simple example of the apparatus' flabbiness. As a result of the inability to choke off the violence and eradicate it, suspicions were directed at the conservative Arab states that they were behind the training or financing of the Moslem Brotherhood.

As a result of these doubts, relations with Jordan worsened, and became cool with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The regime vacillated between its urge to openly voice its suspicions and its interest in keeping on good terms with these countries, especially as they, and not the steadfast and resistance front, financed (along with Iraq) the front facing Israel, and made up for the larger portion of Syria's deficit.

Thus, President al-Asad's regime found itself isolated and faced the very impasse which Salah Jadid faced in 1970: internal isolation, successive waves of political and religious violence, isolation within the Arab world caused by suspicion or indecision, and, perhaps, ill will or just bad luck.

Moscow Strengthens the Regime's Resolve

Some senior members of political organizations both within and outside of "the National Front" believe that President al-Asad's regime was prepared to offer many political "concessions" at the end of the year, in the interest of domestic relief from the pressure of the wave of religious violence which has cost the lives of nearly 200 supporters of the regime.

However, a major political change has occurred as a result of a foreign element, represented by the visit of Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, to Damascus, and his lengthy conversations with President Hafez al-Asad.

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It is difficult to know what takes place in official meetings surrounded by extreme secrecy, but it is possible to track their results by looking for any changes or modifications in the regime's foreign and domestic policy.

After the visit, a sudden hardening occurred in the regime's positions. The olive branch, which had been extended to the opposition political forces abroad, vanished. The calm Arab tone turned into an obstinate radical tone. The voice of Damascus these days has become more like the voice of Aden's 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il, if not like the voice of Karmal in Kabul.

Did Damascus find secure refuge in the Soviet boat?

It may be fair to say, quoting the Syrian regime's supporters here, that Damascus is not Aden or Kabul, and that Hafiz al-Asad is not 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il or Karmal. Perhaps this is true to a considerable extent. Even the Syrian Communist Party, loyal to Moscow under Bakdash's leadership, acknowledges in its semi public pamphlets and newspaper that it is wrong to demand that al-Asad's regime be socialist or radical.

Perhaps this is true to a considerable extent by virtue of the fact that the regime depends on a non-communist military and sectarian base to protect its back and to prevent Syria from being transformed into a red state.

However, who can guarantee the future?

Fidel Castro was no communist when he came down from the mountains to attack Battista, but later became secretary general of the Cuban Communist Party.

It may be difficult for President al-Asad to be a Castro or a secretary general of the Syrian Communist Party, because of various political considerations, but who can guarantee what might happen in the foreseeable or unforeseeable future in terms of a friendship treaty and military cooperation with Moscow, or in terms of a "qualitative change" in relations with it, according to the expression of the socialist "gentleman" 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam?

Muhammad 'Ali Haytham was prime minister in Aden under the umbrella of the alliance with Moscow. Salim Rubay' 'Ali was chairman of the presidium under the umbrella of the alliance with Moscow. And 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il was chairman of the presidium under the umbrella of the alliance with Moscow.

Muhammad Daud led a coup against his cousin, King Muhammad Zaher Shah in Kabul in 1974, in agreement with Moscow.

There is no need to recall the fate of the four under the umbrella of cooperation with Moscow. Perhaps it can be said that there are treaties of friendship and cooperation binding more than one country in the Third World

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with Moscow, and that what happened to Haytham, Rubay' and Daud did not happen to the leaders of these countries.

However, the answer to this is that these countries are not ruled by isolated regimes which can be easily swept away.

Damascus and Moscow must be reminded that Syria is extremely sensitive to this type of treaties or to "qualitative changes [in relations]."

Syria and Egypt did previously contract with a communist country to import arms in the fifties, but Syria itself did not even accept assistance from specialized international agencies and organizations for two long years after its independence, believing that this assistance might affect its independence.

But what is happening today?

The Soviet Union has provided vast amounts of military assistance to Syria, and perhaps had a lot to do with supporting its steadfastness. But the Soviets, in their race with the Americans over the strategic centers in the world, especially in the Middle East, are making a big mistake as Washington did a long time ago.

Moscow today, like Washington, as a means of achieving its tactical or security interests, supports regimes which, to say the least, could be described as "isolated" or "unpopular." This support is done at the expense of the subjugated peoples' struggle to complete their national, political and economic liberation. It is support which completely contradicts the public principles of a major power like the Soviet Union, whose record so far cannot be compared to the black record of American policy in dealing with the peoples of the Third World, and especially with the Arab Nation.

Religious Opposition's Positions Obscure.

We have talked about the regime. But what can be said about the opposition, and in particular the religious opposition? The visitor to Damascus, weighing the stories and tales passed on sometimes by whispers and sometimes openly, must surely record that there are young men ready to take on the police. They know beforehand that the confrontation might end in death by the authorities' bullets or torture until death in their dungeons.

However, there is much more that must be said frankly to the religious violence groups, just as frankly as we addressed the regime itself, so long as the ultimate goal is to protect this country so dear to every Arab's heart.

Tacit popular sympathy does not negate the fact that there is a large question mark in Syrian minds about the political direction of these groups, a matter which causes them to appear very obscure to the Syrians.

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No one knows anything about the political program or the ideological cast of these groups, nor about the form they would set for Syria in the future. The pamphlets and printed material abundantly distributed here, and probably in other Syrian cities, offer a simple, almost naive picture of these groups' political aspirations.

It is not fair, as some politicians and intellectuals in the Syrian capital say, to sacrifice all this blood and life on behalf of obscure purposes and goals. On the contrary, this ambiguity is one of the weapons to which the security apparatus resorts with the citizenry in combatting these groups.

There is nothing in the pamphlets about provisions for a desired and hoped for democratic life, nothing about public freedoms, nor about guarantees of these freedoms. There is nothing about freedom of parties, freedom of the press, freedom of beliefs or freedom of thought and its diversity. There is nothing, in detail, even about applying the Holy Sharia, nor about forms of government and their legal and constitutional responsibility.

The religious violence groups have so far shown their weapons and their readiness to sacrifice, but what about their ideas?

The danger of the course of religious violence is represented by whether it persists within the framework of superficial communication which cannot differentiate between political and social systems beyond using terms such as "Party of God" and "Satan's Party."

Beneath the present state of intense pressure and maneuvering on the Syrian scene, Syria has political, social, sectarian, denominational and racial movements, factious and associations, along with dissimilar and conflicting cultures.

We cannot remove the facade of one regime only to replace it with another facade of "obscure simplicity," merely using different slogans and justifications. Otherwise, whatever impelled the religious violence groups to bear arms might cause other groups to use the same method against them.

Is It Too Late?

It is right for the observer visiting Damascus to stop for a minute, in the midst of violence and counter violence, to ask: "Is it too late to retrieve Syria from the abyss into which it is falling?" To put it more frankly and boldly: "Is it possible to reach some sort of political formula in order to stop the killing between the regime and its opposition, so long as its result is known beforehand to the combatants?"

We put our questions to some informed politicians here. Some of them replied with scornful pessimism. "Do you expect peace when you hear about "national screening" and about preparation for a slaughter whose victims will be "a million martyrs." Or, "Do you expect peace when you read in the pamphlets about 'atonement' and about 'the Nusayri regime?'"

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However, some of those to whom we put out questions, whose political and cultural position cannot be denied or who cannot be accused of not being widely informed about their country's affairs, said cautiously: "Yes, it is possible. It is still not too late to retrieve Syria. The opportunity is still good, despite all the bad things that have happened so far."

How?

President al-Asad can do a lot to achieve political liberalization in the country, if he can persuade the extremists in his regime that retreat does not mean defeat. He can argue that establishing a true, democratic regime with specific guarantees, with a share being given to the various political forces in the country, is the only choice, not only for the regime, but also for the forces which oppose and fight it.

What are the guarantees?

How can there be a "retreat from a position of power" without a loss of face? What are the constitutional forms for the proposed regime? What is the role of the army, the parties, and the groups in this regime? Or rather, frankly, what is the position of each group and faction in it?

It is difficult to devise a formula or impose it. Surely it is up to everyone, all organizations and factions. There must be a truce so as to sit down around a table and conduct a national dialogue.

One who hears that it is possible to save Syria, while he follows from abroad the chain of violence and bloodshed, is convinced that it is impossible to reach a solution through dialogue. However, living among Syrians these days, whatever their leaning may be, convinces one that the nature of this small, vital people is very far from violent. However, a courageous step is necessary. Does the regime have the courage to take it? Or is it predetermined, as Col Rif'at al-Asad says, to sacrifice "a million martyrs"?

Are the privileges of some regime or other, or some group or other, worth a people shedding their blood for them, and sacrificing a million martyrs?

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TUNISIA

ACTIVITIES OF NEW PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 11 Jul 80 pp 1721-22

[Text] While Prime Minister Hedi Nourira was unavailable for health reasons, President Habib Bourguiba put all his energy into ensuring the highly-placed personal contacts so indispensable to conducting the affairs of the Tunisian government. And since Mohamed Mzali became the head of the government on 23 April the chief of state has only partially given up this revival of activity. Besides visiting the convalescing Hedi Nourira frequently in the interest of friendship, he continues to have long talks, not only with highly-placed foreign visitors, but also with politically important Tunisians--such as for example Tijani Abid, secretary general of the Tunisian General Federation of Labor (UGTT), and Bechir Zargalayoun, chairman of the "Rank and File Advisory Council," who were received on 26 and 28 June respectively; he presides over important demonstrations, as for example the "Day of Knowledge" on 30 June at the famous Sadiki College. And Mme Wassila Bourguiba, his wife, who must have exerted considerable influence in the political changes that accompanied Mohamed Mzali's accession to power, is also receiving many people, not without publicity.

Quite naturally the new leaders of the party and the government, by speaking at many demonstrations, are showing their desire to fulfill their roles brilliantly. Mongi Kooli, the party's director, is addressing not only the Destourian cadres, but youths, teachers, etc., to recommend in classic fashion militantism, integrity and altruism. Driss Guiga, minister of the Interior, who in his post as ambassador to Bonn has been away from the country for a long time, is renewing closer contact with it by means of his provincial tours.

On the other hand it may be said that after he left the party leadership Mohamed Sayah certainly did not efface himself: as minister of Equipment he emphasizes the present and future accomplishments of his department, from the Bizerte road bridge to the Medjerda-Cap Bon canal and the Lake Tunis purification project; nor does he neglect his traditional mission as an historiographer; and his evocations of the internal autonomy first achieved a quarter of a century ago are very pleasing to the chief of state.

But, as is fitting, it is chiefly Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali who is giving more and more short speeches and interviews. An official trip to the Mahdia

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governorate during the latter half of June enables him to develop social--especially economic--themes to which his predecessor had accustomed provincial audiences. Perhaps more willingly, he approaches with verve the subjects of general policy, governmental doctrine, education and ethics.

On 21 June Mr Mzali interrogates Mahdia's Destourian cadres: "Why are some youths still on the fringe of the national community? Why have not all the citizens been made aware of our development programs? The difficulties are neither of a material nature nor due to the harmful actions of certain subversive elements...The explanation lies rather in the shortcomings of our orientation and education action. The cadres, instead of busying themselves with initiating youths into beneficial action and real self denial, are themselves neglecting those virtues and getting lost in details; they must look within themselves and change their attitude..."

"The spirit of openness," Mr Mzali continues, "certainly does not mean casualness, let alone anarchy, but really listening to the ideas of others, being available to young people, a willingness to change...Real openness can only be achieved by a strong, just government that enforces the law and administers equitably, without oppression or repression."

With regard to foreign public opinion, however, Mr Mzali is still prudent. When asked early in June by the Saudian daily AR RIADH about whether he might be intending "to tighten the ranks and help to unite all the forces," he answers by minimizing the problem: he "does not think there are fundamental differences between the nation's active forces, the Tunisian society being a golden mean society that does not believe in the inevitability of the class struggle and has known neither feudalism nor bourgeoisie." The differences are not profound; they express a conception of the Tunisian society as a "common denominator based on national unity, aspiration to democracy and devotion to socialism." This is why, he adds, he himself has always "remained isolated from the politicking policy that ends in playing politics" and has devoted himself to "constructive, modest and objective action." His method, therefore, will be Bourguibian, in order to bring together "the greatest number of skills, energies and currents."

Mohamed Mzali's first official trip abroad as head of the government had Morocco as its destination. According to President Bourguiba's directives, he was to consolidate the fraternal and cooperative relations established between the two countries, to accelerate the setting up of previously-concluded agreements and to increase the number of joint economic, social and cultural projects.

Morocco and Tunisia having no common borders, ideas of Maghribian and Arab unity can be approached by both states in an atmosphere of perfect understanding. "Our Maghribian and Arab peoples," says Mohamed Mzali in AL ALAM, an organ of the Istiglal (2 June), "aspire to unity without a doubt. But in the future we must spare them the disappointments that result from improvisation and being too precipitate. It is incumbent upon us to weave the solid ties of cooperation and reconciliation that definitely lead to unity, even if it takes

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several generations. Unity is an end that we must bring about by progressing toward it in steps, without either hesitations or changes of mind... Our relations must follow a clear plan, solidly based, rejecting revolution-are solutions, such as watered-down solutions and false solutions contrary to the principles...It is in our interest to continue to be the Maghrib of the States, as a step toward realization of union, followed by unity."

When he arrives in Rabat on 9 June Mohamed Mzali begins the talks he characterizes as "fraternal, positive and candid," and confirming "the identity of positions and similarity of approaches." While the Moroccan premier, Maati Bouabid, sees in this contact "a new milestone on the road to building the Great Maghrib," the head of the Tunisian government believes "the time has come to make progress in together laying the foundations of the Great Arab Maghrib."

Mohamed Mzali's visit had been hoped for, on the part of the Moroccans, so that the possibilities of approaching Algeria might be jointly explored, with a view to negotiations on the subject of the former Spanish Sahara. But the Tunisian premier, well informed on Algeria's position and not wishing to compromise his chances for dialog with that state, where he plans to go soon, gives no hint of his positions on that subject, in the course of his audience with King Hussan or during the talks with his Moroccan counterpart.

Also, the final speeches on 11 June agree on a wait-and-see policy, albeit expressed in rather different ways. For Morocco, a Saharan peace sanctioning the territorial ascendancy it has achieved remains the immediate objective: "We are," says Maati Bouabid, "condemned to being just one nation alone, and our only hope is that everyone will be aware of our passionate desire to see peace and cooperation established in our region, in mutual respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the regions of the Great Maghrib." For his part, Mohamed Mzali, believing that the two countries are "linked by the same future and a common destiny," concludes by evoking a moral and abstract unity, to be made more specific in the long run: "Unity does not mean integration, at least as far as our generation is concerned...We are aiming at a functional unity, reflected in unity of hearts and feelings, unity in programs and coordination of positions."

In line with those future prospects it was decided, at the time of the Tunisian premier's stay in Rabat, to create a "Tunisian-Moroccan Fraternity League," whose protagonists are Ahmed el Jed and Moulay Abdullah Alaoui--both members of the Young International Economic Chamber--and whose initial structuring will be provided by Tayeb ben Cheikh, the Moroccan secretary of state for Planning and Regional Development. Along the same line, a Tunisian-Moroccan Investment Company was founded.

Finally, on that occasion two agreements were signed, one relating to economic and technical cooperation, the other establishing a large joint commission. It was agreed that a commercial agreement would also be concluded, exempting from customs duties the products exchanged between the two countries and

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providing for mutual consultations making it possible to bring Moroccan and Tunisian progress into harmony with the expansion of the EEC, a measure that also threatens their production.

Mohamed Mzali, who was received at the Rabat Guest Palace, which is generally reserved for foreign heads of state, and welcomed by the sovereign with special benevolence, was able on that occasion to measure the diplomatic and political credit of which Tunisia is the beneficiary.

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TUNISIA

COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS, NEEDED CHANGES OUTLINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 9 Jul 80 pp 30-31

[Article by Mohamed Charfi, professor at Tunis University: "The Swallow and the Summer"]

[Text] Important events are taking place in Tunisia. President Bourguiba has replaced the government team in the broadest sense of the word. True to his usual method, he has acted with successive strokes, taking one limited or individual measure each day. After three months one realizes that, from top to bottom of the scale, most of the organs of government have changed hands. The movement has of course affected the members of the government, but it has also affected the members of the PSD [Destourian Socialist Party] politburo, the governors, the principal directors of the administration. Another movement has begun which affects the diplomatic corps and the presidents and managing directors of large national corporations. One would say that even though it has remained faithful to its president, Tunisia has changed its political apparatus. And, by the same token, its policy.

Wage increases have been decided upon simultaneously with a series of not insignificant social measures, which were announced in a much-talked-about speech, remarkable for its style, made by the prime minister on 1 May. Lastly, most of the imprisoned union members, basic militants and members of the legitimate executive bureau of the UGTT [Tunisian General Federation of Labor] have been released. They even allowed themselves the luxury of delivering a passport to Ahmed Ben Othman, who holds the sad record for the longest and most painful resistance to the "interrogatory sessions" of the police.

More generally, we are witnessing a relaxation of tensions in political life. The most optimistic go so far as to predict that soon /the legitimate leadership/ [in italics] of the UGTT will return to its rue M'Hamed Ali quarters, that the main opposition currents will be in a position to publish their newspapers and that a general amnesty, providing it is pronounced in proper form, will be applied, at least de facto.

One could only applaud if Tunisia could actually go--in a few months and smoothly--from a monolithic and authoritarian regime to a pluralistic and open liberal regime.

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However, certain parallels inevitably come to mind. During the 1969-1970 term Tunisia experienced a comparable change in the composition of the government, in the distribution of the principal political, administrative and diplomatic offices, and there were also releases of political prisoners. Some saw in this a sign of liberalism in the regime. But others were not fooled by it. In particular, the victims of the 1968 repression were familiar enough with their torturers to know that they were still in place. Nothing fundamental had been abandoned. Even though in the person of Ahmed Ben Salah a scapegoat had been designated to shoulder the responsibility for the authoritarian practices in use, one knew that the evil remained, having its cause in personal power and the single party system. So all there had been was a temporary relaxation of tension, a false opening up.

Are we witnessing today a repetition of the experience of the early 1960s or a much more profound change? If the country's needs are taken into account, the latter is true. For Tunisia is going through a grave and multiform crisis.

On cultural, linguistic and even civilizational levels Tunisia has experienced a relatively sudden change. From a traditional, half tribal society, having a foundation of Arab-Muslim civilization, on which are grafted the residue of the dark centuries of our decadence with all it implies, such as archaic customs and backward attitudes, we have gone in the space of a quarter of a century to a so-called modern society--that is to say, basically urban but also and chiefly Franco-Arabophone, copying the West in everything and no longer knowing what it is.

Traumatizing mimicry. Like any excess it has produced its opposite: the integrist movement. It is no easy task to find the happy medium between these two extremes.

Although the pro-Westernism was created by grave internal problems, who can say whether it is aggravated by a similarly oriented foreign policy? Tunisia should assume its role as host country to the Arab League, chairman of the "Group of 77," Africa's representative in the Security Council, while a former foreign affairs minister is secretary general of the Conference of Islamic States. Instead of that we see Tunisia voting, for example, against Iran in the Security Council. This is no simple happenstance. It is enough to recall that during the Vietnam War the pro-Americanism of some of our leaders led them to reveal themselves to be more royalist than the king.

Geopolitical imperatives, like the sensitivities of public opinion in the interior, should lead to a change of foreign policy, in particular to better relations with our neighbors, until it becomes possible to build the Great Maghrib. Of course the clearly hegemonic attitude of some does not make things any easier. But the problem is not necessarily unsolvable.

In the economic area, the policy practised in the last decade was in one sense a success. The decision to favor tourism, small business, immediately profitable projects, was appropriate for a country that has few natural resources

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and where the fundamental imperative is to create jobs. It has born fruit, which it would be unjust to minimize. In the non-oil-producing Third World Tunisia is one of the top few with a strong average increase in the PIB [gross national product] and a not insignificant per capita income.

However, this economy is suffering from two serious maladies. On the one hand its turning outward, especially toward the West, means a heavy dependency and a dangerous fragility. On the other hand, growth is chiefly quantitative. Its bad distribution has dug a huge chasm between the well-to-do and the others.

The existence of an active and fully representative labor union movement is indispensable in that regard. Without minimal social justice the experiment would be non-viable and development impossible. In that respect the experiment of 1974-1976 was beneficial. For the first time in the history of independent Tunisia a free union movement was allowed to develop and was thus strengthened. That was the period of the simultaneous play of influence and counter-influence. One got the idea that Houira and Achour were inseparable because they were indispensable to each other. To think that was to make an abstraction of political fact. The regime developed in monolithism from the time it was born and could not accept with any gaiety of spirit an evolution so clearly leading to a bipolarization of political life--even, middle term, to bipartism. The drama of 26 January 1978 was ample proof.

But, just as an infection is not cured simply by lowering the temperature, so an important social phenomenon cannot be suppressed by destroying its external manifestations. The discontent of the working class is one of the basic aspects of the present crisis.

At the same time, youth is angry. The university is functioning badly, paralyzed by student strikes. This institution seems to be entering upon an impasse.

More generally, the Tunisian society is experiencing a profound crisis. A totally underdeveloped society has its balance. Advanced development creates a certain balance. But progress toward development is a constant source of tension. Transitional situations are known to be the source of serious difficulties. Great flexibility is needed to solve them, a perpetual search for new balances, an almost permanent challenging of solutions decided upon, in order to adapt them constantly to changes. Well, on that level, policy is not following along.

Everything has changed in a quarter of a century. The political regime alone is experiencing an imperturbable permanence. No organization, no structure plays a decisive political role. Mestiri and Nouira are well aware of this; each has had his congress that turned out to be a short one.

Tunisia is confronting enormous difficulties for which there is no formula. Except for the formula that consists of establishing a broad and

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non-exclusionary national debate, after emptying the prisons and opening up the country to the political exiles, and of making every citizen feel it is possible for him to bring real influence to bear on political life. Obviously this requires a radical change in governing methods.

In those circumstances do the measures taken in recent months announce a change? Hope is not forbidden. But one swallow has never yet made a summer.

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TUNISIA

EXCERPTS FROM PCT STATEMENT PUBLISHED, COMMENTED ON

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 7 Jul 80 p 8

[Text] Mohamed Enafaa, Mohamed Harmel and Abdelhamid Ben Mustapha have sent us a statement on behalf of the PCT [Tunisian Communist Party], dated 9 June and prefaced by the following letter:

"In your edition of 14 April 1980 your newspaper published an article entitled 'Rupture Among Tunisian Communists,' basing the article on tracts circulated in Paris and signed 'Young Tunisian Communist Woman' or 'Tunisian Communists in France.'

"We are amazed that your newspaper is jumping into hazardous speculation without verifying the merit and the true origin of these tracts. Your good faith has certainly been caught out. To reestablish objective verity, we ask you to publish the attached statement."

At the very least it is improper to circulate a statement intended for us before we have even received it. This text, addressed to AFRIQUE-ASIE, was in fact distributed in the form of tracts at a congress held in Paris last 16 to 18 June. Nevertheless, here are some excerpts:

"AFRIQUE-ASIE thought it should credit this operation and devoted a commentary to it under the title 'Rupture Among Tunisian Communists.' For purposes of demystification we issue the following statements:

- "1. A single individual is hiding behind these signatures...
- "2. In these tracts, in which invective and calumny take the place of argument, the author denounces the Tunisian Communists as 'accomplices of the government' and calls them 'false communists' and 'false opponents.'
- "3. Violently attacking the socialist democrats, calling them 'false liberals,' the newspapers ERRAI and DEMOCRATIE, he reproaches the PCT for having a policy of alliance vis-a-vis these currents...

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"4. Despite the freedom he took with the principles of their movement, despite his declared hostility toward their positions and despite the efforts he deployed to poison their relations with friendly movements, the Tunisian Communists have shown patience and good will in permitting him to make corrections. But in the discussion that naturally followed he chose the path of provocation, by publicly and disloyally developing a line he had never expressed before. He thus bears the responsibility for placing himself clearly and deliberately outside our movement."

The above words also call for four comments:

1. AFRIQUE-ASIE was not the only periodical to inform of the rupture among Tunisian Communists. The upheavals that have existed within the PCT since 26 Jan 1978, which were amplified following the Gafsa insurrection, have caught the attention of numerous observers. The weekly AL DESTOUR and the daily AL SAFIR among others have echoed it. It is true that both are forbidden in Tunisia, as is our own newspaper, by the way.
2. The positions taken by the PCT shortly after 26 Jan 1978 and the Gafsa affair brought on a malaise--the least that can be said--in Tunisian patriotic and progressive circles.
3. Wishing to minimize the rupture and blame it on the initiative of a single person (which is inaccurate), the signers of the statement certainly do not take into account the interest aroused by the tracts signed "Tunisian Communists in France" and the animated discussions that have taken place in Tunis as well as in Paris. It was for that reason in particular that our newspaper believed it would be useful to publish news of it.
4. This statement, which is very late, makes no reference at all to the Gafsa affair, which, we recall, constituted the essential point dealt with by the incriminated statement.

The Editors

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END