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JPRS L/10073

26 October 1981

# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 38/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

TUNISIAN-SAUDI ECONOMIC COOPERATION OUTLINED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1868, 28 Aug 81 p 2210

[Text] Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali met with Saudi Minister of Finance and National Economy Muhammad 'Ali Aba al-Khayl on 14 August in Tunis. The Tunisian ambassador to Jeddah, Mr Kacem Bousnina, and the charge d'affaires at the Saudi embassy in Tunis, Mr Muhammad Assaad, were also present. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Saudi minister said he had transmitted to the prime minister the greetings of King Khalid ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud and the members of the Saudi government to President Bourguiba and the members of the Tunisian government. The discussion, he added, dealt with the relations between the two countries and questions of common interest, as well as the developments seen in bilateral economic cooperation in connection with the projects carried out and those to be carried out shortly in Tunisia.

To judge from these most recent indications, Tunisian-Saudi cooperation is developing favorably. The discussion between Mr Mzali and Mr Muhammad 'Ali Aba al-Khayl came in fact shortly after the official visit paid by Sheikh Turki Khaled Sudeiry, president of the Saudi general office of public works, to Tunisia between 9 and 13 August, when he had an audience with President Bourguiba and met with Mr Mzali and a number of other cabinet members, among them Minister of Foreign Affairs Beji Caid es-Sebti, Mr Mezri Chekir, minister attached to the prime minister for civil service and administrative reform, Minister of Public Health Rachid Sfar, and Minister of Social Affairs Mohamed Ennaceur.

The talks dealt in particular with the recruiting of Tunisian cadres to work in Saudi Arabia, with both parties confirming the need to give new impetus to technical cooperation. Sheikh Turki Khaled Sudeiry said in this connection that the recruiting office for government employees which he established during his visit demonstrated the desire of Saudi Arabia to recruit cadres from among skilled Tunisian workers on various levels and in all fields. He recalled, moreover, that some 65,000 cooperative workers, for the most part Arabs and Moslems, are currently working in various sectors in Saudi Arabia, particularly in education and health.

The two parties agreed during the course of the work session to establish Saudi needs for a period of about 5 years, insofar as possible, in certain sectors, and in particular in the realm of medical services. This should allow Tunisia to train the necessary cadres in time, as a function of the Saudi government structures.

In addition, Tunisia will shortly make available to the Saudi government a wide range of skills, including cadres to work in the medical sector, teachers, engineers and technicians with various specialties such as civil engineering, topography, mechanics, data processing, etc.

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The two parties also agreed to establish the conditions for recruiting and to guarantee its organization within the framework of coordination between the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency and the Saudi Recruiting Bureau, based on the principles adopted during the course of the joint meeting.

Let us recall, moreover, that we reported earlier (MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS, 12 June, p 1585) on the signing in Tunis on 8 June, by Tunisian Minister of Finance and Plan Mansour Moalla and Mr Mohamed Abdallah Soukeir, vice-president and general director of the Saudi Development Fund (FSD), of a loan agreement involving 16 million riyals (about 25 million French francs) for the financing of the Sidi Saad dam protection project.

On that occasion, Mr Mohamed Abdallah Soukeir noted that the FSD had already allocated credit in a total amount of 545 million riyals, or in other words the equivalent of \$161 million, to Tunisia, as a contribution to the financing of four development projects. He stressed that with the signing of the new agreement, the total credit grant to Tunisia was increased to 561 million Saudi riyals, or 87 million Tunisian dinars. Mr Mansour Moalla, for his part, expressed satisfaction with the results of bilateral cooperation, concretely implemented in recent months with the establishment of a Tunisian-Saudi Investment Company for Development and the participation of the Saudi Development Fund in joint projects.

Mr Mahsoun Jalel, president of the board of directors of the Tunisian-Saudi Investment Company, accompanied by Mr Sadok Bahroun, president and general director of the company, met with Minister of Housing Moncef Bel Hadj Amor, who presided at a work session in which Mr Zakaria Ben Mustapha, mayor of the city of Tunis, participated, on 20 August in Tunis. At the meeting the programs for the reconstruction and modernization of large sectors of the city of Tunis and the possibilities for cooperation between the Tunisian authorities and the Tunisian-Saudi Investment Company in this connection were discussed. Proposals were established and will shortly be subjected to study.

Let us recall, moreover, that a number of businessmen have recently visited Tunisia, where some are financing major projects. For example, Dr Gaith Faraoun is financing the construction of the Port Monastir tourist complex, for which the cornerstone was laid on 4 August by President Bourguiba, and which will cost an estimated 20 million dinars (1 dinar is the equivalent of about 11 French francs). Built in the area known as Gdamsi Island, this complex will include a hotel, apartments and tourist residences with a total capacity of 2,500 beds. The construction work on the complex should be completed within 2 years.

On the occasion of that ceremony, President Bourguiba was shown a mock-up of a film production complex which Mr Tarek Ben Ammar proposes to build in Monastir (on the Kairouan road). This project will also be financed by Dr Gaith Faraoun. It will include a number of studios and all the equipment necessary for film production. The cost of the project, which should be completed by March 1983, is estimated at 8 million dinars.

Also on 4 August, the chief of state, together with the prime minister and a number of other cabinet members, met with Saudi businessman Sheikh Salah Kamel and his assistant, Sheikh Hassine El Harisi, in Monastir. All of these visits bear witness to the vitality of Tunisian-Saudi relations, and augur the development of cooperation consistent with the recommendations of the Arab League designed to encourage the use of Arab skills in Arab countries.

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AFGHANISTAN

KABUL TROOPS HELD BY GUERRILLAS IN PAKISTAN

PM131501 London THE GUARDIAN in English 13 Oct 81 p 6

[Dispatch by Alexander Thomson: "Kabul Troops Held by Guerrillas in Pakistan"]

[Text] Peshawar--Captured Afghan soldiers are being held in captivity in Pakistan by at least one of the guerrilla groups whose headquarters are in Peshawar. There have been reports that these groups hold Afghan Government troops inside Pakistan, without the approval of the government here but they have not been seen or interviewed before by Western journalists because of the embarrassment their presence in Pakistan could cause.

I met and spoke to a group during an unannounced visit to the headquarters of Sayed Gailani's National Islamic Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan. There were about 40 men queuing up for food being ladled out at dusk from a ragged tent in the corner of a small compound guarded by guerrillas armed with AK-47 Kalashnikov rifles.

It was difficult to assess their exact status and members of the National Front were anxious that they should not be called prisoners of war. One official said they sometimes brought defectors to Peshawar under guard to check their bona fides but most deserters encountered in Afghanistan were simply allowed to go on their way.

The guerrillas are more impressed by Afghan Government troops, who fight bravely until they are captured and "re-educated." The official said what communism they had in their heads was knocked out and replaced by Islam.

If they were reluctant to be converted "we twist their ears a bit." He said that the National Front did not believe in eliminating them. The official would not say how long the Afghan troops were detained or how long their interrogation lasted. A leading Afghan journalist living in exile in Peshawar said that most were held for comparatively brief periods. Afghan officers were kept in detention longer. He said most guerrilla groups were holding prisoners in Peshawar. Some were loosely guarded, others were under what he termed "house arrest."

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One of the Afghan soldiers in the compound, who gave his name as 'Abdul Malik, said that he had been captured after recent fighting in the strategic Panjshir valley. He had originally been captured by another guerrilla group which had stolen his watch and illtreated him. They then let him go. He eventually handed himself in to the National Front "because it is led by a religious man (Sayed Gailani) and I thought I would be better treated."

Another man, Mohammad Yasin, was a former driver with the Afghan Ministry of Education from Laghman Province who had been pressganged into the army in Kabul. He was drafted into the 52nd regiment from which he managed to escape. He was captured by Afghan soldiers who held him in a camp where he said he was beaten up. But, with the collusion of his guard he managed to escape and made his way to the National Front.

Also queueing up for food was a man who called himself Huminullah. He too had been pressganged into the army in the streets of Kabul and had been sent to Kandahar to fight. While serving as a soldier he had supplied local guerrillas with ammunition but they would only allow him to defect if he brought his Kalashnikov with him.

His story, and those of others in the compound, support reports from diplomatic sources that the Afghan Army is facing a serious shortage of manpower and is having to resort to strong-arm methods to get young men into uniform. The irony of this is that after giving the conscripts basic training and a gun they sent them to areas strongly infiltrated by guerrillas where defection is easy.

Also in the compound was a man collecting food for 30 men held in a camp elsewhere in the Peshawar area. He came under guard and the impression was that the other men were allowed less freedom of movement by the guerrillas.

These former Afghan soldiers are a valuable source of information and manpower for the guerrilla organisations. Most do not need much surveillance or guarding. They are mostly simple men who do not need much persuading, if any, to adopt the guerrillas' cause. Many, after they are cleared, are only too pleased to go back and fight as Mojahedin.

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IRAN

POLITICAL PROSPECTS AFTER BANI-SADR PROGNOSTICATED

Paris PROJECT in French Sep-Oct 81 pp 1011-1014

[Article by Hushang Nahavandi, former chancellor of the University of Tehran--passages enclosed in slantlines printed in boldface]

[Text] The political elimination of Mr. Abolhassan Bani-Sadr and the attack of 28 June 1981 against the headquarters of the PRI [Islamic Republic Party], which along with the "Tudeh" party, is the country's dominant political formation, followed by the increased repression of leftwing opponents, have brought Iran back to the center stage of world events.

The situation in Iran--still involved in a murderous and devastating war, in the grip of an economic crisis, with public and clandestine executions and an absence of any normalization--has been extremely serious all along. But with the resolution of the somber hostage affair, world attention drifted away and people lost some of their interest.

Both the internal and external position of Iran have been deteriorating ever since the departure of the Shah and take-over of the government by Ayatollah Khomeyni. Indeed, the country is in the grip of bloody anarchy, and no one knows how it will end.

In the two and one-half years they have been in power, Iran's leaders have been unable to come up with any social model, economic strategy or political alternative. References to certain Islamic texts and quotations from the Koran are merely for the sake of form. In reality, violence has become the only means of governing, and repression the only remedy. By the admission of all its leaders themselves, the regime's record is grim: Half the people in the job market unemployed, dizzying increases in the price of basic commodities and galloping inflation, a budgetary deficit of 40 percent, insolvency of the state, paralysis in the administrative judicial apparatus, the shutdown of the universities, insecurity, the exodus of more than one million Iranians, the destruction of the cultural heritage.... The face of Iran today is that of a completely disorganized, ruined country, with no political institutions worthy of the name, in reality the victim of all manner of cupidities, and menaced by all sorts of dangers.

Iran's International Isolation

The nations of the world recognized the Islamic Republic in February 1979. Since that time, not even the United States and Egypt--which no longer have diplomatic



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relations with Iran--have withdrawn that /de jure/ recognition of the authorities in Tehran. Paradoxically, though Iran and Iraq are at war, they have not closed down their respective embassies in the enemy's capital, a state of affairs apparently unique in the history of diplomacy. And Israel--whose very name it is officially forbidden to pronounce in Iran, but which was given /de facto/ recognition by Iran under the monarchy--maintains commercial relations, described in fact as flourishing rather nicely in some accounts, with Khomeyni's regime. Now of course this hardly prevents the authorities in Tehran either from engaging in harsh repression of the Iranian Jewish community and periodically executing certain individuals charged with "Zionist tendencies," from supporting numerous Palestinian mercenaries in Iran, or most importantly from making substantial contributions to the coffers of the Palestinian movements.

Despite these often strange facts, "Islamic" Iran seems very isolated internationally. The complete disregard for the rules in international law, failure to honor signed contracts, the encouragement of subversion in many countries, and, above all, the hostage affair have made of the Tehran government an undesirable "partner" for all intents and purposes. Certainly, the Soviet Union fully supports the Islamic Republic as it does all the countries in the socialist camp and some of the "non-aligned" states in the Third World. But that support does not make up for Tehran's isolation, its state of being internationally "quarantined."

The policy of national independence and balance followed by Iran under the monarchy since the mid-1960's, the neighborly and cooperative relations it maintained with the USSR despite its special relations with the West, the substantial part it played in Third World development and above all the effective and beneficent role it played in the Persian Gulf made its foreign policy a success that even its most intransigent critics found it difficult to deny. The Islamic Republic's foreign policy has made it an isolated, discredited and weak state whose voice can scarcely be heard in the concert of nations.

## Internal Dissension

The Islamic revolution is still very violent. According to some estimates, the number of its victims is already more than 100,000, the size of an average city. The numbers are even more tragic if one adds the victims of the Iran-Iraq war, which we will discuss below. Like all other revolutions, the one in Iran is devouring its children. The political elimination of Mr. Bani-Sadr and the 28 June explosion at PRI headquarters which cost the lives of at least 74 persons--coming after the violent attacks which cost the lives of various other leaders and which remain unsolved, after the successive elimination of the secular and nationalist factions and after the imprisonment of numerous other individuals who played an active role in the overthrow of the monarchy--serve as good illustrations of that principle.

Part of the Western press wanted to make Mr. Bani-Sadr the representative of a "liberal faction," indeed a secular faction, within Iran's current leadership. In fact, however, the deposed head of state never challenged the basic orientation of the regime, as embodied in the Islamic constitution, or its totalitarian, racist and regressive aspects. Both as a member and later as president of the revolutionary council he participated in organizing and carrying out all the human rights violations committed by the Tehran regime. The "theoretician" of a fantastic "economics of divine unity," he tried for several months to implement it by simultaneously running all of the government's economic and financial departments. His criticisms of the

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economic management of the Islamic Republic would thus seem to be hypocritical. Once the war with Iraq broke out, he tried to achieve the image of an intransigent nationalist. If it were confirmed that Iraq gave him political asylum, there would be yet one more contradiction in the comportment of this strange and puzzling figure.

In fact, his overthrow was only one episode in the bloody factional in-fighting within the regime, just like the explosion at PRI headquarters, which cost the lives of Ayatollah Beheshti, "Islamic" Iran's strong man, as well as the lives of a number of other leading figures belonging to his faction.

With regard to that explosion, all the evidence actually points to the probability that internal accounts were being settled: The PRI headquarters was so well protected that the attack could only have been prepared and executed by persons who enjoyed free access to the building and were able to position the explosives at the spots selected. Several important leaders who were not members of the Beheshti faction were absent from the meeting, even though they were obliged to attend. Others were called out of the meeting just a few minutes before the explosion, without any explanation. For some time various American commentators had been discussing the possibility of stabilizing the Iranian regime around Ayatollah Beheshti, who, along with General Huyser of the United States, was the architect of the February 1979 "neutralization" of the Iranian army that made it possible for Khomeyni to come to power.

All these disturbing and revealing facts have obviously been passed over in silence in Tehran, where the authorities, like Hitler with the burning of the Reichstag, have made the attack the pretext for even more repression against opponents. In effect, the faction that has emerged unscathed, and therefore stronger, from the attack, is the faction with ties to Palestinian maximalists, such as Mr. Georges Habbache's FPLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine], and a predisposition toward greater cooperation with the /"Tudeh"/. This latter party, which religiously follows the Soviet line, immediately threw its support to the candidacy of Mr. Mohammed Ali Radjai, an insignificant and totally docile individual, for president of the republic. It looks as if he is certain to win, and if, as some believe, an individual from the same faction, such as Mr. Behzad Vabavi, reputed to be a Marxist and pro-Soviet, becomes the head of the government, a new stage in the radicalization of the regime and its reconciliation with Moscow will have been reached.

**The Iran-Iraq War**

In September (when these lines will appear) the first anniversary of the [outbreak of the] Iran-Iraq war will be celebrated. The Iraqi leaders, misinformed, it would seem, about the intensity of Iranians' patriotic feelings, despite their aversion to the regime, and counting on feeble resistance from armed forces that have been decapitated and reduced by Iran's current rulers, expected a quick victory, indeed even the collapse of the Islamic Republic. In fact, the war goes on. Iraq, which only committed part of its forces and gets substantial support, it apparently technically capable of capturing several more important centers, and would like to unleash separatist movements in Iran. Neither Iraq's internal situation nor the lives of citizens have suffered too much; but the country cannot permit the indefinite continuation of this war of attrition and position against in Iran whose patriotic reflexes are deeply rooted even in its weakened and lacerated condition, without either a brilliant victor or some prospect of winning one.

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Despite the 30,000 acknowledged victims of the war and the more than one million displaced persons it has produced, despite the massive destruction and the prohibitive financial cost to the Iranian state offers, the authorities in Tehran do not appear to be desirous of ending the war, even though militarily it cannot be won. For on the one hand this strange war makes it possible to maintain a state of permanent tension within the country and explains away the economic problems, and on the other it enables the army to be kept far from the capital and thus forestalls--until such time as they have succeeded in "normalizing" the situation--any reaction from that side.

## Prospects For the Future

As things stand now, the most radical faction, the one ready for close collaboration with the Tudeh and the Soviet Union, seems to have prevailed on the domestic front. All opposition movements have been successively decimated, including the extreme left, both Marxist-Islamic and Marxist-Leninist. Nevertheless, the Tehran regime, having brought nothing but anarchy, misery and terror, is far from being stabilized. The majority of Iranians, now that they have lost their revolutionary illusions, have become deeply hostile to it. Cladestine resistance movements are spreading rapidly within the country. Ayatollah Khomeyni, whose real power was not insignificant, no longer seems able to control the situation. Certainly, the regime is still able to mobilize several tens of thousands of people for street demonstrations which are rebroadcast abroad and help create the illusion. But is that enough to govern a large country?

From this viewpoint, the Islamic Republic has no choice but to become yet more radicalized. Cut off from the elite it has decimated, lacking support in the army that it tried to annihilate, having lost the confidence of the middle class it has disappointed, challenged by a large portion of the clergy who disavow it, facing revolt in several provinces, only one other alliance is possible: To rely even more on the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) and to move closer to Moscow. That, ultimately, would mean Iran's almost total alignment with Soviet policy. It is unnecessary to point out the regional and international consequences of such a development. The balance of power would be altered on the global scale. Could the United States, which under the Carter Administration favored Khomeyni's coming to power in Iran, permit such a development under the current Administration? If no other solution is possible, would it favor the dismemberment of Iran at the hands of Iraq and other intervening powers? That would be a serious political mistake on the part of the West and a tragedy for the Iranian people.

Inside the country, the armed forces, which have remained nationalistic on the whole, remain the last resort possible; they are capable of putting together a vast coalition of the vital forces of a nation and offering the possibility and the prospect of a different solution. Iran is at the crossroads. Its destiny is at stake, as is the worldwide balance of power.

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BALUCH CHIEF SUPPORTS RETURN OF MONARCHY

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 25 Sep 81 p 35

[Interview with Crown Prince Reza by Jean-Jacques Bruges: "Iran Wants Return of Monarchy"]

[Text] [Question] Your father passed away more than a year ago. Since then you have become shah of Iran, swearing upon the Koran that some day you would liberate your fatherland. But the situation has deteriorated considerably. How do you think you might attain your goal?

[Answer] I have around me young advisors, officers, lawyers, constitutional experts, men of religion, nationalists--all of whom are honest Iranians and who have the support of the people and who moreover believe in God and their fatherland and that is something that appears indispensable to me.

Besides, we are not isolated. I regularly talk to the chief opposition leaders. I receive personalities and tribal chiefs currently living in Iran who, at the risk of their life, meet with me, who inform me, and who assure me of their loyalty. I recently received a Kurdish chief whose name I cannot tell you and the leader of the Baluch opposition, Aman Allah Khan, who is in charge of the armed faction of the Baluch Unity Front.

I also have contacts with diplomats, politicians, members of governments, and even heads of foreign states. The circle of my friends keeps growing with each passing day.

As for the rest, the influence which one or the other personality, who may be close to me or far away, might have upon me is illusory. The nicest example of this situation is after all my mother herself, an extraordinary woman and human being, who declared in public that she was the world's youngest queen-mother; she intends to remain aloof from political problems in order to leave me under the protection of God in facing my destiny and my people.

Indeed, God is my only guide and only God can influence my decisions. Like all Iranians, I am essentially a believer and I feel that my destiny is in the hands of God and my people because without the help of God no man in the world can follow his destiny.

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We must however also recall the image of the king in Iran's history; he is not only the symbol of the country's unity, independence, and territorial integrity but also, in some way, the father of the people in the true sense of the word, the man to whom one can always go at any time, the man who receives people the way a father receives his children, a man who can listen, advise, help, and render assistance. His direct political intervention however only comes in exceptional cases. Is that not a constitutional monarchy?

[Question] Do you really believe in national reconciliation?

[Answer] Iran has been bled of its vital forces. For us, therefore, there is no question of depriving Iran of all those who have left but who rediscovered the right way at the right time, when the day comes, by the grace of God, when our country, with a monarchy, recovers peace, stability, and security. Believe me, there are many of those today who are sorry that the monarchy is gone and who realize that they are guilty of having allowed themselves to be swept along into a reaction which, deep down, they themselves did not want.

Of course, those who were killed and those who organized the hateful crimes which are now being perpetuated in Iran, those who ordered the sentencing of our fellow citizens without trial and without appeal, they will have to account for their actions to the justice of God but also to the justice of men. We suffer each day as we see Iranians die, assassinated, or sacrificing their life to save their fatherland. We suffer as we see innocent people die in this pre-civil war situation and we pray to God for them and their families, realizing however, unfortunately, that only the disappearance of this regime could put an end to this drama.

Our country, our people, will know how to liberate themselves amid unity from the yoke of the current regime and the army certainly will play a primordial role in this. Although deprived of its long-term leaders, diminished by the incoherence of the current establishment, the Iranian army is fighting and remains profoundly loyal to the monarchy. It would be easy to me, in view of the information I have, to claim that one or the other action was carried out by one or the other monarchist group. But it would not be wise to expose those who sacrifice their life to save their ideal and our fatherland.

I repeat, democracy will not exist in Iran until we have the monarchy which itself today could only live in this democracy.

[Question] Does this constitutional monarchy correspond to present-day realities?

[Answer] You know that, among all of the experiments that were attempted in Iran, only the monarchy was able to guarantee stability and domestic peace. This is why undoubtedly a very large opposition is now rallying, a majority of people who support the cause of the constitutional monarchy--and they have made themselves known. Perhaps a year ago they were too worried. They did not have the courage to declare themselves in the midst of the terror regime which had been established. Anybody who would have dared to say even a single word along those lines was immediately executed by firing squad or hanged. Or, at best, he was thrown in prison. But today, the people can no longer put up with that situation. The people feel that they are marching toward total destruction if the situation is not gotten under control, if the top leadership is not removed. Either a civil war will break out or the country will forever be wiped off the face of the earth and the history of mankind.

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There are many action groups in Iran and they are very effective. They are fighting for our cause. They are being killed for it. And many others are ready to follow their footsteps. All of us have great respect for our ancestors, the fighters who, at the beginning of the century, got themselves killed in the revolt that led to the promulgation of the new constitution, establishing the constitutional monarchy. Later on, it will be our sons who will have respect for their fathers and who will have fought for the restoration of this constitutional monarchy, in the letter and the spirit of the constitution of 1906. It is obvious that the international situation will have a role to play among all of the political powers. Iran is in a very important geopolitical region. Moreover, there is petroleum which plays a vital role in the world.

I cannot see how anybody in this world could not be interested in what goes on in Iran, who does not feel concerned with the history of Iran. Iran cannot remain isolated.

[Question] The ex-Shah, your father, had the sad privilege of being one of the most-attacked statesmen over these past several years. All countries, except Egypt, closed their doors to him, after he went into exile. What do you think of that attitude?

[Answer] I am sure that history in the end will give credit to my father for what he did for his fatherland during the 37 years of his reign and that history's judgment in the end will be positive. Historians tell us that an event or a personality in history can be properly appreciated only after a certain period of time has gone by. If you are at the foot of a mountain, you can see it only partly. You do not notice details. But if you go further away, several scores of kilometers, it is possible to get an overall view of this mountain and you can then get an idea of its height and its majesty.

In a similar manner, I think that it is too early to make any judgment but what we must say is that, after what we have seen happen over just one year, many historians are surprised and find that the current situation enables them to come up with a judgment long before the time usually necessary has gone by.

Iran's chaotic situation today suffices to explain many things and men of good faith, who keep themselves informed, I hope, will in the end judge my father in a positive fashion.

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LIBYA

URANIUM PURCHASES FROM NIGER UP SHARPLY

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1870, 11 Sep 81 p 2327

[Text] During the first six months of this year, Libya purchased 1,212 tons of uranium from Niger, six times more than in 1980, and for the first time, Iraq bought Nigerien uranium, 100 tons, at the beginning of the year. This information is contained in the orders published in the JOURNAL OFFICIEL DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU NIGER during the first six months of 1981.

Two Arab nations: Libya and Iraq, have therefore bought nearly a fourth of the 4,846 tons of uranium exported by Niger during the first six months of 1981.

According to the JOURNAL OFFICIEL, Libya bought from Niger 258 tons in 1978, 150 tons in 1979 and 380 tons in 1980. It is possible that the figure of 1,212 tons represents a bookkeeping adjustment including the deliveries of the three previous years.

Nevertheless, these Libyan purchases are disproportionate when compared with the capabilities of the country, which has but a small research reactor supplied by the Soviets and which uses at most a dozen kilograms of enriched uranium. According to observers, the Libyans do not have a reprocessing facility, which means that the uranium can only be stored or sold abroad.

For years, Libya has tried to obtain from the Soviets a license to build about a 400-megawatt nuclear powerplant, but have not yet succeeded. Specialists wonder about the civilian usefulness of such a facility for such a sparsely populated country so well provided with energy resources.

Aside from Libya and Iraq, Niger delivered uranium to four other countries during the first six months of 1981: France, the top-ranking customer (nearly 2,300 tons); Japan (816 tons); Spain (300 tons); and the Federal Republic of Germany (125 tons). Through subsidiaries, these four countries participate in the capital of the two Nigerien enterprises that mine the uranium ore (see Niger column).

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SAUDI ARABIA

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PEACE PLAN DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 236, 21-27 Aug 81 pp 28-30

[Article: "The Saudi Olive Branch between the Holy War and the Political Effort"]

[Text] Fahd's plan annoyed al-Sadat, embarrassed the Americans and cornered the Palestinians.

Reactions to the Saudi plan for a comprehensive settlement varied, but there is a general agreement that it gave form to an Arab position that manifested itself in the shift from an ambiguous formula for a holy war, which Saudi Arabia had previously adopted, to that of a political effort which is defined by articles and conditions. The political department of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI prepared this report in a question and answer format. It includes an adequate summary of the substance of the Saudi suggestions, the Arab and foreign reactions to them and their political consequences as well.

[Question] Why did Saudi Arabia choose this time in particular to propose its settlement plan?

[Answer] There is a feeling that a unified Arab position on the Middle East that would have the greatest Arab support possible has to be formed. Such a plan has to stay away from the ambiguity and the obscurity of slogans and ideologies at a time when the grounds for Arab disputes are growing, Israeli provocation is escalating, the European initiative is fading and the United States is appearing as though it were getting ready to resume its diplomatic action in the area.

[Question] What is the Saudi plan's chance for gaining Arab acceptance?

[Answer] The Saudis are now following Arab reactions with interest. If they find the reaction to the plan to be negative, they will stop acting on it without losing anything. But if they find encouragement, they will propose it at an emergency Arab summit or wait till the regular summit meeting next November.

[Question] There are those who say that the Saudi plan complements the Camp David accords.



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[Answer] Prince Fahd says in introducing his plan that the Camp David accords are no longer useful. Other Saudi officials said that the plan was a substitute for Camp David, that it [implied] a total rejection of President al-Sadat's role and that it [involved] an attempt to break the deadlock that is surrounding the crisis in the area.

[Question] But those who opposed the Saudi plan said that it had been coordinated with the Americans, [did they not]?

[Answer] Some of the articles included in the plan, especially those that pertain to the PLO, do not have the United States' approval. At any rate Prince Fahd says that the Arabs have no disagreement with the United States, except with regard to Palestinian rights. The time has come for the U.S. government to be less partial to Israel and more fair to the Arabs.

[Question] Can it be said that the new Saudi initiative is an extension of Saudi Arabia's initiative in Lebanon where it succeeded with U.S. coordination in stopping the Palestinian-Israeli war that lasted 2 weeks?

[Answer] Maybe. The Saudis are proud of the role they played in stopping the war in Lebanon. Prince Fahd says that the purpose of that role was to stop the bloodshed. He is satisfied with the United States' "prompt and effective" agreement with Saudi Arabia. It may be that the period of relative calm which Lebanon experienced encouraged the Saudis to propose a plan for a comprehensive solution in the area with the implicit belief that their success as intermediaries between the Americans, the Palestinians and the Syrians in Lebanon may furnish them with greater opportunities for success as intermediaries and partners in a larger settlement plan.

**Correspondences and Differences with the U.S. Position**

[Question] Then there is at least an implicit correspondence between U.S. and Saudi steps in the area, [is there not]?

[Answer] U.S. and Saudi cooperation is traditional, but this does not mean that the steps they take correspond to each other in most cases. When Prince Fahd was presenting his plan, he said, "We are not satisfied with U.S. policy in general, especially with regard to Palestinian rights." Prince Fahd is calling upon the Reagan administration to stop its armed support of Israel. He does not agree with Washington about Camp David. The Saudis also oppose the international polarization that is taking place in the Gulf, and they do not agree with the Reagan administration that the Soviet threat takes precedence over the Israeli threat.

[Question] If this is the case, are there any chances for a Saudi-U.S. conflict? What are the measures that Saudi Arabia may take to put pressure on the United States?

[Answer] It is a traditional principle in Saudi policy not to become engaged in sharp confrontations. However, after a Saudi position was formed and defined by articles and conditions, the Arabs who supported Saudi

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Arabia's plan, and chief among them are the Palestinians, will be the first to call upon Saudi Arabia to turn to use its economic weapons, that is, oil and financial investments abroad and to turn away from purchasing U.S. weapons.

The first step that Saudi Arabia may take if it does not perceive a change to speak of in the U.S. position during the next few months is to cancel Prince Fahd's [scheduled] visit to Washington next November.

[Question] Has the Saudi plan gained major Arab approval?

[Answer] The supporters of the plan proclaimed their support publicly, and the opponents have so far at least been silent. The Palestinians are split between supporters and opponents. At any rate Soviet propaganda agencies on the Arab scene are highlighting the plan.

[Question] What specifically is the position of the Palestinians?

[Answer] The PLO supports the plan. 'Arafat and the principal faction in Fatah support the Saudi plan. Saudi Arabia had contributed 20 million dollars for the Palestinians after Beirut was bombed. This is in addition to the 100 million dollars that Saudi Arabia reportedly pays annually to the PLO. The Saudi crown prince praised 'Arafat especially when he presented his plan to 'Arafat, emphasizing [the latter's] statement that the Palestinian factor was the basic factor in the Middle East equation. He also indicated that the cease fire agreement did not mean that the Palestinian people would stop their march on the course to gain their rights. Prince Fahd reminded the United States of the need to recognize the liberation organization "because any comprehensive peace would be based on that."

The Palestinian left, however, promptly rejected the Saudi plan wholly and separately. The Popular Front (George Habash) described it as recognition of Israel and falling short of meeting minimum acceptable Arab [demands]. The Democratic Front (Nayif Hawatimah) said that it gave Israel more gains. Meanwhile the mayors of the West Bank, those who support the liberation organization or those who support King Husayn, hailed it.

[Question] What about the Syrians?

[Answer] The Syrians are hard pressed. They are not saying anything now, satisfied with attacking the Saudi initiative in Lebanon through the political organizations that are loyal to them there. Their distress is caused by the fact that Damascus cannot veto the Saudi plan because it was promised that financing for the Syrian troops in Lebanon would be resumed. It is estimated that these expenses are 90 million dollars every year. Saudi Arabia also played a role in dispelling the tension that coincided with what was known as the Syrian missiles crisis.

[Question] What about the Iraqis?

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[Answer] The Iraqi position on the Middle East question is known. So far there has been no Iraqi comment on the Saudi plan. However, the Arab Liberation Front, which is the Palestinian Organization that is sympathetic to Iraq, has announced its rejection of the plan.

At any rate, Iraq's opposition to the Gulf Cooperation Council, which is sponsored by Saudi Arabia, and the fact that Iraq criticizes Saudi oil policy do not prevent us from saying that relations between the two fraternal countries are close and the dialogue through diplomatic channels is continuing. Fahd said that the Saudi national commitment to the preservation of Iraq's power needs no confirmation.

[Question] But the Saudi plan did not speak about Lebanon, [did it]?

[Answer] The eight articles did not actually refer to Lebanon, but the Saudi crown prince did say in the introduction and in the legal justifications for the plan that Saudi Arabia was interested in establishing peace and stability and supporting the lawful government through the Arab Follow-Up Committee. The Saudis are always urging Syria to calm the situation in Lebanon. They believe that a relaxation of tension in Lebanon is the beginning of the relaxation of tension in the Arab world.

[Question] The Lebanese government did not comment on the Saudi plan for a solution, and President Sarkis seems interested in convening an Arab summit.

[Answer] The Lebanese government is not commenting on the plan because it is waiting for the Syrian comment. But it is evident that President Sarkis supports any crystallization of an Arab position if that would help solve the crisis in the area with which the Lebanese crisis has become linked. As far as his prime minister, Shafiq al-Wazzan is concerned, the Islamic Grouping to which al-Wazzan belongs and which is sympathetic to Saudi Arabia has announced its ardent support for Fahd's plan.

It is curious that the National Movement (the Lebanese left) and the Lebanese Front, which includes the Maronite armed militias, rejected the Saudi plan.

With regard to convening the emergency summit which Lebanese diplomacy is seeking, Saudi Arabia has no objections. President Sarkis, however, does not place much hope on the summit. He only wants to put on record the fact that the Arabs were not able to save Lebanon as a result of their differences.

[Question] Can the Arab position in general be summed up in the Saudi plan?

[Answer] Saudi Arabia wanted to have its plan form a specific Arab position on the Middle East question. But the current Arab reality does not furnish the required consensus. Egypt and Sudan are involved with Camp David; Libya is [preoccupied] in Chad; Morocco is embarking on a confrontation with Algeria; and the disputes are known and obvious in the Arab East.

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[Question] But why did President al-Sadat express his irritation with the Saudi plan?

[Answer] Al-Sadat is saying that the Saudi plan did not bring anything new. He is publicly encouraging Saudi Arabia to take political and diplomatic action. But he is implicitly very suspicious of Saudi policy. He believes that Fahd's plan has targeted his accomplishments in Camp David and that its timing during his visit to the United States was planned to capture the limelight.

[Question] But al-Sadat too did not get anything new from his recent meeting with Reagan. The U.S. president turned down his plea to recognize the PLO.

[Answer] The failure of al-Sadat's visit is one of the reasons why the the Saudi plan is causing him to worry. It is making him fear that the Saudi plan may actually replace Camp David which has remained in the context of an isolated solution. Through the autonomy talks this solution has not been able to achieve anything for the Palestinians, while Egypt's will was turned over to the Americans and Egypt itself was isolated from the Arab world.

The importance of the Saudi alternative lies in the fact that Saudi Arabia is politically and diplomatically stronger than al-Sadat. It carries weight with the United States; it plays a role on the Arab scene; and it can speak on behalf of the Palestinians.

[Question] Why did the Israelis reject the Saudi proposals even though these proposals convey a tacit willingness to recognize them?

[Answer] The Israelis as usual saw only the part that was consistent with their policy and their interests. With their various affiliations they cheered the Saudi willingness to recognize them, but they rejected the rest of the plan which stipulates that in return for giving them recognition, they are to withdraw from the land they occupied in 1967, dismantle the settlements and establish a Palestinian state. In their opinion, all this seeks "the destruction" of their state.

[Question] If Israel rejects the Saudi plan, what hopes are there for a peaceful or a political settlement in the area?

[Answer] The Saudi plan is not addressed to Israel. Its purpose is to persuade the United States that the Arab position is flexible and to encourage it to put pressure on Israel. Even THE JERUSALEM POST said, "Khalid and Fahd are cunning. Why do we let them go as far as they can using Israeli rejection as an excuse?"

The United States Is Interested in the Saudi Role

[Question] What is the U.S. position on the Saudi role?

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[Answer] It is not yet known whether the United States' cool attitude toward the Saudi plan was intended or not. The spokesman for the U.S. Department of State said that there was nothing new in the plan but that it was suitable as a basis for the settlement.

At any rate, the United States is interested in the Saudi role in the area as an intermediary between the Americans on the one hand and the Palestinians and Syrians on the other. The Americans view with great admiration the success achieved by Saudi Arabia in the efforts that led to the cease fire in Lebanon.

[Question] To what extent can the Americans go along with the Saudis in their insistence on the need to achieve a comprehensive and just solution in the area?

[Answer] It seems the Americans are embarrassed by the Saudi plan. The Reagan administration, which has so far concerned itself with dealing with the economic situation, is not prepared to plunge immediately into the search for an urgent solution in the Middle East. Reagan's sympathy with Israel, which has been unprecedented since Truman's administration, is tying his hands and preventing him from putting pressure on Israel. The evidence for this lies in the fact that Robert Newman, the U.S. ambassador in Saudi Arabia, lost his position because he said in front of the U.S. Congress that Secretary of State Haig was "a tool in the hands of the Israeli lobby."

Reagan took action and sent veteran diplomat Philip Habib to prevent, with the help of the Saudis, an outbreak in Lebanon that could lead to an armed confrontation between the Arabs and the Israelis which may destroy U.S. interests in the area.

But Reagan does not appear to be prepared to offer a Middle East initiative before the beginning of next year.

[Question] What is keeping him from doing that when he recognizes the danger of the situation in the area?

[Answer] Reagan is waiting to complete his meetings with the leaders of the area. He met al-Sadat this month. He will receive Begin in September, King Husayn in October and Prince Fahd in November. After that he will focus on studying the information he compiled to form a U.S. position. He will either adopt Camp David which the Arabs are rejecting and al-Sadat and the Israelis are adhering to, or he will come up with a new initiative whose general lines cannot be predicted now.

[Question] Who has more influence on the United States, Israel or Saudi Arabia?

[Answer] Both have strong ingredients for putting pressure on the United States, but Israel is capable of influencing the U.S. political process through the Congress and through the small circle [of people] around

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Reagan. This is due to the strength of the Israeli and Zionist lobby there. Saudi Arabia, however, has many cards that it has not yet used, such as the oil weapons, the capital invested in the United States and the interests of U.S. companies doing business in Saudi Arabia. Above all that comes the importance of Saudi Arabia's strategic location in the area and the role of the Saudi regime in preserving the "balance of moderation" in the Arab world.

The Reagan administration is now trying to reconcile its reliance on Saudi diplomacy in establishing a dialogue with Arab radicals with its reliance on Israel as a military power [exercising] pressure and coercion in the area. Saudis and Arabs will not allow this to continue.

[Question] Where does Europe stand amidst this intense involvement in the area?

[Question] Europe welcomed the Saudi initiative, but the discussion about the European initiative has faded as a result of U.S. pressures.

The Soviets Are Coming

[Question] What about the Soviet Union?

[Answer] The presence of the Soviet Union in the area is greater than it has been at any time since the Soviet Union left Egypt in 1971-1972 and since it airlifted supplies to Egypt during the October war.

[Question] What are the aspects of this Soviet return?

[Answer] The successive visits of Arab officials to Moscow in the recent period. Al-Qadhdhafi visited Moscow; then Jalud visited it; al-Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad; then King Husayn; Chadli Bendjedid, Faruq al-Qadumi and Taha Yasin Ramadan.

The Arabs are urging the Soviet Union to play a stronger role in the area to oppose the fact that the Reagan administration is going along with Israel in the aftermath of the bombing of the Iraqi reactor and Beirut.

[Question] What is the Soviet position with regard to the recent developments in the area?

[Answer] The Soviet Union, being one of the two superpowers in the world, is trying like the United States to gain more than one foothold in the Middle East. But Moscow has appeared to be more logical and closer to the Arabs through the promises that Brezhnev made to neutralize the Gulf--and this is something that pleases the people of the Gulf--and through the resumption of the appeal to convene an international conference to solve the Middle East crisis. This too is a matter that the Arabs do not oppose.

[Question] At one time the Soviets appeared to be not strongly opposed to the Camp David accords.

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[Answer] Total Arab rejection for Camp David has encouraged the Soviets to intensify their opposition because the Camp David accords deprived them of the role that they wish to play in solving the crisis in the area. Such a role would be an expression of their influence in the area and [would represent] an adherence to that role and to their presence in the area.

The Soviets now believe that the United States and Israel have used al-Sadat to the point of humiliation. Washington made him support Israel against the Arabs, and Israel embarrassed him with its provocative surprise adventure in the Arab world.

The Soviets also believe that the bombing of the Iraqi reactor was carried out according to a U.S.-Israeli plan and that the AWACS airplanes were stripped of some of their sensitive equipment to prevent them from monitoring Israeli infiltration operations into the air space of the Gulf.

[Question] What is the Saudis' attitude toward the Soviets?

[Answer] Saudi Arabia was almost the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviets. But then these relations have been cut since 1938. Had not the Soviets overrun Afghanistan, there would have been considerable rapprochement in bilateral relations in the recent period.

Despite strong Saudi criticism of the invasion of Afghanistan, informed diplomatic sources are saying that communications between Saudi diplomats and the Soviets have been taking place in several foreign capitals. The two sides have discovered many points on which they agree besides the points on which they disagree.

[Question] Do the Soviets support the Saudi plan?

[Answer] Notwithstanding the fact that in Moscow's opinion Saudi Arabia is an extremely conservative country, the principles comprised in Fahd's plan do not differ much from Soviet ideas on a solution to the crisis of the area.

Fahd's Principle

The Saudi plan for a solution as proposed by Prince Fahd comprises the following items.

--Israel's withdrawal from the land it occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

--The removal of the settlements that were built in the occupied land after 1967.

--Ensuring the freedom of worship in the holy places.

--Affirming the rights of the Palestinian people and compensating those who do not wish to return.

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--Subjecting the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to a period of transition under the supervision of the United Nations and for a period that is not to exceed a few months.

--The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with its capital, Jerusalem.

--Affirming the right of the countries of the area to live in peace.

--The United Nations or some of its member nations are to guarantee the implementation of these principles.

The Saudi plan for a solution stipulates three conditions for the implementation of the settlement.

--The unlimited U.S. support for Israel is to be stopped.

--Israeli arrogance as represented by Begin is to be restrained.

--The Palestinian factor is to be accepted as the basic factor in the Middle East equation.

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION STATISTICS GIVEN FOR 1980-1981

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1870, 11 Sep 81 p 2327

[Text] According to statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, the 1980-1981 season has yielded the following results for the main types of agricultural production:

Cotton: 730,000 bales, broken down as follows: long fibers, 292,000; medium fibers, 406,000; short fibers, 32,000. The 1980-1981 harvest represents nearly a 25-percent increase over the previous harvest. Nevertheless, it is far lower than the best crop of the last 5 years, that of 1977-1978, when 1,015,000 bales were produced.

Sorghum: 2,124,000 tons, up 27 percent over the previous season (1,669,999 tons).

Millet: 492,000 tons, up 60 percent over the preceding harvest (309,000 tons).

Peanuts: 799,000 tons, down 6.2 percent from the previous season (852,000 tons).

Sesame: 211,000 tons, or the equivalent of the previous harvest (209,000 tons).

Wheat: 220,000 tons, down 6 percent compared with the previous season (233,000 tons).

Gum arabic: 32,000 tons, or an increase of 45 percent compared with the previous season (23,000 tons).

Cotton production for the 1980-1981 year is therefore shows a rather strong increase over the 1979-1980 year. Unfortunately, world prices continue to drop, which points to a heavy deficit in the trade balance. Cotton exports for the 1979-1980 year brought in \$333.4 million, or 78 percent of all the Sudan's export receipts, which represented a slight increase in foreign exchange income over the previous fiscal year (up \$12.7 million), but the increase was essentially due to the liquidation of stocks from previous years.

The foreseeable deficit in the trade balance will be slightly attenuated by the sale of other farm production exported: sorghum and gum arabic.

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