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# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 42/81)



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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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### CONTENTS

#### IRAN

Begin Allegedly Visited Tehran in 1978 To Meet Shah (THE JERUSALEM POST, 12 Oct 81) .....	1
Diplomats Kidnapped in Undercover Arms Purchase Deal (THE SUNDAY TIMES, 18 Oct 81) .....	4

#### LEBANON

Raymond Iddih Discusses Political Situation (Raymond Iddih Interview; AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 21-27 Aug 81)..	6
Briefs 'AL-NAHAR' Director Kidnapped	20

#### LIBYA

Journalist Describes Recent Changes (Mohamed Selhami; JEUNE AFRIQUE, 30 Sep 81) .....	21
Briefs	
Factories Opened	26
Plastics Contracts	26
Oil for Goods Deal	26
Accord With Czechoslovakia	27

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IRAN

BEGIN ALLEGEDLY VISITED TEHRAN IN 1978 TO MEET SHAH

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English, SUCCOT SUPPLEMENT 12 Oct 81 p 7

[In an excerpt from his new book, "The Iranian Triangle," Shmuel Segev describes the Israeli Prime Minister's trip to Tehran for secret talks with the shah in February, 1978]

[Excerpt]

THE FIRST HALF of 1978 was marked by increased tension in Israel-Iran relations. The abrupt cessation of the negotiations between Israel and Egypt in Jerusalem, on January 16, gave a renewed push to Arab opposition to the Egyptian peace initiative, and raised fears in Washington and Teheran for the safety of Sadat's regime.

The mounting hostility to Sadat's regime found expression in the terrorist takeover of an Egyptian airliner in Cyprus. In an attempt to free the hostages, Egypt rushed a commando unit to the Larnaca airport, but the attempt failed and 15 Egyptian soldiers were killed. Cyprus cut off its relations with Egypt in protest against the violation of its sovereignty. As a result of this fiasco, the hostility already felt towards Sadat throughout the Arab world was tinged with contempt.

Making an effort to break the stalemate in the peace talks, President Jimmy Carter invited the Egyptian president and Premier Menachem Begin to Washington on separate visits. Sadat went to the U.S. on February 4, while Begin was due there on March 15.

On his return from Washington, Sadat flew to Bucharest on February 11 to report to Rumanian President Nicolae Ceausescu on his talks with Carter. At the same time he dispatched his vice-president, Hosni Mubarak, to Teheran to tell

the shah about the difficulties in the negotiations with Israel. Meanwhile, Carter met with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan in mid-February, while Sadat held discussions with the head of the opposition, Labour Party chairman Shimon Peres, in Salzburg.

BUT THESE meetings failed to move the peace talks forward. Dayan's talks with Carter failed to achieve their aim, while Peres made it clear to Sadat that only Begin's government was authorized to conduct negotiations in Israel's name. But Washington was determined to keep up the momentum, and dispatched Assistant Secretary of State Alfred ("Roy") Atherton on a shuttle round between Cairo and Jerusalem.

This intensive activity led Teheran to wonder if Israel was truly aware of the danger to Sadat and that it was imperative to act quickly to bolster the West's position in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area. From this concern emerged the idea of arranging a meeting between Begin and the shah in order for them to get acquainted and to examine the stalemate in the peace process in a broad international context.

The halt in the talks occurred together with a deterioration in the internal security situation in Iran, although no one then could foresee that it would lead to the downfall of the shah.

Iran's internal problems, even if they stemmed from indigenous causes, were part of a series of events that occurred then in the northwest corner of the Indian Ocean, an area of considerable strategic importance to the West.

At the beginning of 1978 the developments in the Horn of Africa were the focus of international attention. But in the spring, the pro-Soviet coup in Afghanistan occurred, which heightened the shah's sense of insecurity. Even before the bloodbath in Kabul at the end of April, the shah had warned the U.S. of the Soviet Union's designs in Afghanistan, but the message fell on deaf ears. The new ruler of Afghanistan, Nur Mohammed Taraki, changed his country's name to the "Democratic Republic of Afghanistan," and Kabul became a Soviet bastion that now threatened the stability of the entire Gulf region. Some weeks later, in June 1978, came the assassinations of the rulers of both parts of Yemen, which shook the entire Arabian Peninsula.

SOVIET ACTIVITY in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Chad, Zaïre, Angola, Libya and the Republic of South Yemen greatly influenced the shah's state of mind, and the behaviour of his allies in the region. The shah, King Khaled of Saudi

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Arabia, Sadat and the president of Sudan, Ja'afar Numeiri, saw these Soviet moves as aimed at the Gulf and Red Sea areas, with the purpose of encircling Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Nile Valley. Thus in response to the stepped-up Soviet-Cuban aid to Ethiopia, these four nations increased their aid to Somalia, and took measures designed to preserve the independence of North Yemen.

Iran took parallel steps by continuing its aid to Oman. Since 1973 the shah had extended naval, air and ground support to Sultan Qaboos to help him put down the rebellion which was backed by South Yemen, but mainly by the Soviets. Moscow, though, followed a moderate course towards Iran. The first press report on Iran's internal instability appeared in *Pravda* in April 1978, but it was written in an objective tone. Only in November 1978 when the Soviets suspected American intervention to save the shah, did Leonid Brezhnev warn Carter, "that any foreign intervention in Iran, a country bordering on the Soviet Union, will be regarded as intended to harm the Soviet national interest."

The events in the Horn of Africa found Israel and Iran on different sides. While Iran, Sudan, Egypt and the Saudis supported Somalia against Ethiopia, Israel supported the Marxist regime of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam. Israel was thus part of an unusual joint front with the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya and the Republic of South Yemen. Iran had raised this matter in a number of discussions with Israeli officials. But Israel had tried to allay the shah's concern by arguing that the West had an interest in Israel keeping an eye on Soviet activities in the area.

ISRAEL'S POLITICAL, economic and military ties with Ethiopia dated from the days of Haile Selassie. Israeli experts helped to train the various forces in his army, and other advisers helped the army suppress Moslem underground groups in Eritrea. After Haile Selassie's overthrow, Col. Mengistu kept up the Israeli connection, perhaps

because he wanted to keep some room for maneuver in his relations with the Soviets and Cuba, or perhaps because the Ethiopian high command valued the expertise provided by the Israeli officers. But in February 1978, Moshe Dayan made a well-publicized "slip of the tongue," in which he admitted to cooperation with Ethiopia in various spheres. This put Mengistu in an awkward situation, and under pressure from the Soviets and Libya he cut off all ties with Israel.

The Iranians supported Somalia, but never its ambitions to grab the Ogaden Desert from Ethiopia. When the Somali leader, President Ziad Barre, visited Teheran early in 1978, the shah told him in no uncertain terms that he must resolve his dispute with Ethiopia in a peaceful manner. Iran provided Somalia with medical supplies and small arms, but explicitly opposed its expansion at Ethiopia's expense. In March 1978, Ethiopia defeated Somalia in the Ogaden, but fighting continued in Eritrea.

In the midst of these international cross-currents, Begin arrived for his first and only visit to Teheran. It was actually supposed to have taken place several weeks earlier, but because of the revelation of Dayan's visit there in December 26, 1977, the Iranians postponed Begin's visit, and set the condition that it would take place only if the Israelis undertook to keep it a secret.

As on several occasions in the past, there was no real reason for Israel to keep the matter under wraps. But out of consideration for the internal situation in Iran and the shah's own delicate position, Israel accepted the condition and observed it scrupulously. For that reason, only three ministers — Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin, Defence Minister Ezer Weizman, and Dayan — were in on the secret. The rest of the cabinet was told only when Begin had returned.

THE PRIME minister left Israel for Teheran in a Boeing 707 on Wednesday February 22, 1978, and returned home Friday morning. He was accompanied by his chief of bureau, Yehiel Kadishai, and his military secretary, Tat-Aluf Ephraim Poran. After the plane came to a stop on a runway away from the terminal, Begin was greeted by Iran's deputy premier, who was also in charge of the Savak, Gen. Na'amtolla Nasiri. Under cover of darkness, and watched over by a heavy guard of Israeli and Iranian security men, the convoy made its way to the government's official guest residence in one of the northern suburbs of the city.

The following morning before his meeting with the shah, Begin took final counsel with his advisers before he went to see him. In contrast to Yitzhak Rabin, who was always tense before his encounters with the shah, Begin was relaxed and in high spirits, and it was clear that he had prepared carefully for the meeting. Begin was of course aware of Iran's internal troubles, but had no feeling of the impending disaster.

At the appointed hour Gen. Nasiri appeared at the guest residence to accompany Begin on his visit to the shah's palace. After more than three hours Begin returned with a smile of satisfaction on his face. "It was an excellent discussion," he exclaimed.

Several hours later, on the plane, Begin talked about his encounter with the shah. The shah had made a strong impression on him, and Begin was impressed by his broad grasp of affairs. He had spoken authoritatively about the international situation, with special emphasis on the Middle East and the Gulf region. The shah expressed concern about the pro-Soviet coup in Kabul, and said he was sceptical of America's capacity to block Soviet expansion. The shah's *tour d'horizon* also dealt with the Horn of Africa.

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MOST OF THE conversation, of course, was devoted to the Middle East peace process. The shah lavished praise on Sadat, and dwelt on his status as a leader in the Arab world. He believed in Egypt's sincere desire for peace, and urged Begin to be flexible towards Sadat and not to let this chance for peace slip through his fingers.

Begin shared the shah's concern about Moscow's aims in the Middle East. He recounted his experiences during World War II, his suffering in Soviet prison camps, and how he led an underground military group in the struggle for independence.

Concerning the peace process, Begin produced documents to support his argument that Israel's proposals were most generous. He expressed his astonishment at the way in which the Jerusalem peace negotiations had been halted, described the virtues of his programme for Palestinian autonomy, and assured the shah that even now Israel would be willing to renew the talks with Egypt without prior conditions. Even though Begin had not requested the shah to act as an intermediary, it was clear to both leaders that the details of the discussion would be conveyed to Sadat.

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From 'The Iranian Triangle: The Secret Contacts Between Israel, Iran and the U.S.

AT THE meeting, Begin presented the shah with an ancient map of Jerusalem and an antique dagger.

Prior to the meeting, the propriety of raising bi-lateral issues with the shah had been discussed. But after Begin consulted his advisers, it was decided not to raise any special requests at the meeting, but rather to keep the meeting on a broader plane. Actually the shah did not even hint at the possibility of suspending cooperation between the two countries as a sign of his displeasure at the stalemate in the peace talks. Later, in an interview with the *Washington Post* on March 7, 1978, the shah said that, despite the stalemate, he saw no reason to stop oil shipments to Israel. "If the U.S. wants Iran to halt the flow of oil, then it must first stop arms supplies to the Israeli army," he said.

Begin was the last Israeli leader to meet with the shah. Internal developments in Iran in the coming months did not permit further bilateral contacts at the highest level; and all of the shah's energies were focused on saving his throne, rather than on international affairs.

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3  
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IRAN

DIPLOMATS KIDNAPPED IN UNDERCOVER ARMS PURCHASE DEAL

PM180934 London THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 18 Oct 81 p 6

[Unattributed report in the "Insight" feature: "The \$60m Arms Deal That Ended in a Kidnap"]

[Text] Three Iranian diplomats, early last week, walked into flat 37 on the thirteenth floor of the expensive Water Gardens Flats, close to London's Marble Arch. They expected to put the finishing touches to a deal under which they would pay almost \$60 million for desperately needed anti-tank missiles. Instead they found themselves kidnapped.

It was the bizarre culmination of a deal that stretched from America through Europe to Iran and in which the government of Ayatollah Khomeyni was dealing with a former member of the SAVAK, the late shah's secret police.

An American embargo on arms for Iran has forced the Teheran government to buy its arms wherever it can and not ask too many questions. Earlier this year arms-dealing circles in London heard that the Iranians wanted to buy a large quantity of wire-guided anti-tank missiles. These missiles, which can be adapted for use on helicopter gunships, are made by the American Hughes Corporation. The number mentioned was 10,000--and the cost almost \$60 million.

The Iranians were soon told that there was a way to obtain the missiles they wanted. As the Iranians understood it, the missiles would come from NATO stock in Portugal. A large and reputable Spanish arms dealer was said to be supplying them and they would be shipped from Portugal to Antwerp, for loading on to an Iranian ship.

Arms dealers recognise this supply route as a convenient way for Spanish and Portuguese dealers to cover their tracks: neither Spain nor Portugal will supply arms direct to Iran at the moment. But to satisfy the Spaniards, "end user certificates," would have to be produced to show which government was to be the ultimate customer for the arms. The Iranians expected their supplier to buy these certificates from one of several countries that are none too fussy about issuing fake ones for cash.

By the beginning of last week the Iranians believed that the missiles were waiting for them in Antwerp, ready for loading. It is believed that the original plan was to use a ship called the Iran Shahadat, but this ran aground

4  
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at Dunkirk. The only Iranian ship in Antwerp at the moment is the Nezhat, which was diverted from a journey between Hamburg and Bremen to dock in Antwerp on Tuesday of last week. Its next destination is Bandar 'Abbas in the Gulf, but the Antwerp port authorities say that it has been delayed because of engine trouble. Two people alleged to be concerned with the deal stayed in Antwerp last week.

Although the Iranians are not too scrupulous about whom they buy from, they have become much less free about how they pay. In the chaos of post-revolutionary Iran, several deals have left the government short of money and even shorter of the goods they were buying.

And this was not the first time that the Khomeyni government had dealt with former employees of the shah: about 18 months ago a \$6 million deal to buy Irish meat collapsed in mysterious circumstances.

As a result of such experiences the Iranians decided to pay for this shipment of arms by letters of credit. A leading clearing bank in London was to release payment when the arms were safely on board. So when the three Iranian negotiators at the London end of the deal walked into the flat in the water gardens, they were not carrying suitcases full of money.

In the early hours of Friday morning armed police stormed the flat to free the three Iranians, who by then were being held hostage. A number of people, including Britons and Iranian nationals, were taken for questioning at Paddington Green police station.

The British police say that three other members of the negotiating team are being held hostage in Belgium, but last night the Antwerp police said they knew nothing of any kidnapping in their city.

The police team who carried out the London raid was led by detective superintendent John Pole, of the anti-terrorist squad. It is believed that the police only learned of the whole affair early on Thursday evening. The anti-terrorist squad was supported by men from the Scotland Yard's D11 firearms squad and armed special patrol group officers, who took up positions in around the flats. However, no shots were fired.

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LEBANON

RAYMOND IDDIH DISCUSSES POLITICAL SITUATION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 236, 21-27 Aug 81 pp 22-27

[Interview with Raymond Iddih by Nabil Maghrabi: "Raymond Iddih Castigates, Makes Suggestions, Shows His Hand; Soviet Experts Are in Lebanon"]

[Text] Ilyas Sarkis in Washington? This is ludicrous. The Syrian army in Lebanon behaves like an enemy in an occupied country.

If I were to stay in Lebanon, nothing would be easier than having me kidnapped.

Hafiz al-Asad wants to keep Lebanon embroiled in war and is therefore opposing the deployment of UN forces.

I am not thinking now about the presidential elections, but I am thinking about liberating the country.

Brig Gen Raymond Iddih has been making predictions for years: they want to "Cyprusize" Lebanon; they are partitioning it; they want to settle the Palestinians; they want to give the south Litani area to Israel and al-Biqa', 'Akkar and Tripoli to Syria--instead of the Golan; they want to establish a Christian ghetto on the remaining area of land.

The brigadier general continued to talk about "the conspiracy" from Beirut and from Paris as well. The notion of "conspiracy" and conspirators became worn out, but he did not weary of them. He accuses; he castigates; and he casts doubts. He is shot at more than once. People bargain over the truth with him. They urge him to keep quiet, but he continues to hold on to his convictions.

The campaign for the presidential elections in Lebanon is approaching, and there is some discussion about the possibility of amending the constitution so the elections can be held sooner. Raymond Iddih is a permanent candidate for coming to the rescue because he is the only one among the Christian leaders who did not burn the bridges of understanding with the other Lebanese party. He continues to denounce Israel, the Syrian regime and the Maronite leaders, and he has also remained on good terms with all the Lebanese. He has also stayed outside the tempestuous bloody game.

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The brigadier general has not talked with an Arab newspaper for 6 months. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI went to him on the Cote d'Azur where he was on a brief vacation. The magazine re-evaluated with him the stages of the Lebanese war through the recent new factors in Lebanon. It may be that the most notable of these new factors since the Syrian-Soviet treaty is the new U.S. action to make preparations so that the presidential campaign can take place in a suitable atmosphere. This action consists of the mediation of Philip Habib and an invitation to a few "key" Lebanese figures to come to Washington. There are those who are saying--but the Lebanese president is denying this--that President Ilyas Sarkis in particular would be invited to Washington.

The Soviet part of the Kissinger conspiracy; the Syrian-Soviet presence in Lebanon; Israel's ambitions; alternative U.S. aspirations; the features of Lebanon's and Palestine's future. These topics are the most salient topics of this interview. The old and new Raymond Iddih remains the obstinate, surly Raymond Iddih, searching for the truth.

At present the brigadier general is on a brief vacation in Juan les Pins in the south of France, a few kilometers from Cannes. The hotel where he is staying overlooks the sea; Raymond Iddih spends some of his time every day on the beach which resembles the beach of the St George Hotel in Beirut, in the old days.

The leader of the National Bloc party was wearing a casual outfit: a yellow shirt and light summer trousers. The effects of the Mediterranean sun were clearly evident on his face. They were as clear as his answers to the various questions that were dealt with in this comprehensive interview.

[Question] You have stopped granting interviews to the press for a rather lengthy period of time. The time has come for a new evaluation of the developments and repercussions of the Lebanese crisis.

The questions began, and the brigadier general's replies were effusive in the revealing meeting that lasted 6 full hours during which he focused on the Syrian role in Lebanon. He called upon President Hafiz al-Asad to withdraw his troops, and he called upon the Lebanese president to ask the United Nations for UN forces to replace the Syrian troops. This is the text of the interview.

[Question] After 6 years of war, has there been in your view a new significant factor in the Lebanese crisis that can alter the equations which have been in existence so far? In other words, what is the most important new development in the course of this crisis?

[Answer] Yes, a new factor has been introduced into the area. That factor is the Syrian-Soviet treaty which President Hafiz al-Asad signed in Moscow on 8 October 1980. According to this treaty Moscow is to provide Syria with military aid if that becomes necessary. As a result of that, the number of Soviet military experts in Syria has increased. We have recently seen the joint maneuvers between the Syrian navy and the Soviet navy in Latakia.

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Furthermore, there are reports which affirm that today a number of Soviet experts can be found with the Syrian army in Lebanon, especially near the SAM missiles. This new situation has had numerous consequences, the most important of which is the fact that after today it is no longer possible for an agreement to take place in this area without the approval of the Soviet Union.

It seems that President Reagan is convinced now that Camp David will not lead to the required comprehensive solution for the Palestinian question and that it will not put an end to the problems of the Middle East.

I am certain that Soviet presence in Syria can be terminated in two ways only: via war by means of Israel with the help of the United States, and this is unlikely today; or diplomatic means, that is, through some agreement or through reviving the Geneva Conference or a second Yalta that would include several matters, including oil questions, since the oil is one of the principal objectives of Soviet presence in the area.

Everyone now knows that the Soviets are gaining new footholds and new grounds without fighting. If they fight, they do so through an intermediary, that is, through other parties. The Soviets are now in Afghanistan, in Ethiopia, in South Yemen, in Syria and in a special way in Libya. They may be in Chad, not to mention other countries. Thus the area is now surrounded by the Soviet Union. Among the consequences of that is that nothing can take place, even with regard to Lebanon, without the Soviet Union. All this is the result of Israel's obstinacy and its refusal, with the consent of the Kissinger-Carter U.S. administration, to establish a Palestinian homeland in Palestine.

In short, this is the new factor that has been introduced into the developments of the Lebanese crisis: it is the Soviet presence near the UN forces in the Golan, perhaps in the Litani area in south Lebanon and in the Biqa' Valley with the Soviet missiles. This has consequences and repercussions.

[Question] You've talked many times in the past about a Kissinger conspiracy in Lebanon. What connection do you find today between this conspiracy and the new factor that has been introduced into the crisis, that is, the presence of Soviet troops?

[Answer] This presence is one of the results of the ordeal which Israel brought about in Lebanon to keep war away from its territory and, accordingly, to keep the Arabs preoccupied with each other in one battleground, which is Lebanon.

This is an old Israeli plan that Ben Gurion had devised in 1954. It was not carried out then because of the Suez Canal war. This plan requires the creation of political disturbances and unrest in the area to destabilize it. Implementation of the plan began in 1974. At that time I warned that there was an intention to "Cyprusize" Lebanon and to "Vietnamize" the area.

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Then came Camp David which divided the Arabs. It was followed by the war between Iraq and Iran in which President Hafiz al-Asad and Col al-Qadhafi took sides with Tehran. The Syrian president soon felt isolated and alone facing Israel, so he signed a defense treaty with the Soviet Union whose role with Damascus will be similar to the role which the United States is playing with Israel. That is, there will be a Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to support Israel militarily when that is necessary and a Soviet fleet in Syria's territorial waters to support it militarily if that becomes necessary. All this is due to the fact that the Palestinian question is still without a solution because Israel is refusing the establishment of a Palestinian homeland despite the Security Council resolutions, especially Resolution 242, which obligate Israel to withdraw from all the territory it seized in the 1967 war. It is known that Israel is refusing to implement even the March 1978 resolutions of the Security Council which followed the Israeli attack on Lebanon. Everybody also knows that Israel still has a military presence in some Lebanese areas adjacent to the Israeli borders in addition to the forces of Sa'd Haddad.

Thus Kissinger's conspiracy, whose aim had been to partition Lebanon and which I called "Cyprusizing Lebanon," since its aim was to settle the Palestinians in a part of Lebanon, along with Camp David led to the "legitimate" introduction of the Soviets into the area. That is, the Soviets came to the area by means of a defense treaty with Syria. It is thus possible to establish a connection between this new factor and the conspiracy of Kissinger, who adopted the Israeli policy.

[Question] What in your view are the dangers of the Soviet presence in Syria and in Lebanon?

[Answer] Soviet presence [in the area] may lead to war between Israel and Syria. I personally think that this is unlikely because such a war would necessarily lead to U.S.-Soviet participation and perhaps even a Third World War. This Soviet presence cannot yield a new Yalta-type conference at Lebanon's expense. [If that were to happen], Syria would get part of Lebanon, specifically, al-Biq'a, Tripoli and 'Akkar; Israel would get south Lebanon until the Litani [River], after evicting 200,000 Shi'ite citizens from the area; and the Maronites would keep the present Maronite ghetto, which includes half al-Matn, Kasrawan and Jubayl, in expectation of extending that area to the north, which is presently controlled by former president Mr Sulayman Franjiyyah.

[Question] At present, are you optimistic or pessimistic with regard to the possibilities for a solution to the Lebanese crisis?

[Answer] The question is not one of optimism or pessimism. I am a practical, realistic man. In my view there can be no solution to the Lebanese crisis apart from [a solution to] the Palestinian question. As long as the Palestinians remain in Lebanon, the situation will remain unchanged.

If Hafiz al-Asad's Syria entered Lebanon for three reasons--to prevent partition, to stop the fighting and to protect the Palestinian Resistance--

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the Syrian regime did bring about a partitioning of Lebanon that is favorable to it. Today, 80 percent of Lebanon's territory is controlled by the Syrian army. The Israeli army controls 10 percent, and the Lebanese forces control the remaining 10 percent. The fighting, however, is still going on everywhere in Lebanon despite the presence of the Syrian army. As far as protecting the Palestinian Resistance is concerned, we saw how the Syrian army did that during the recent Israeli raid on Beirut.

[Question] But there are some indications that the United States is becoming sympathetic in its handling of the Lebanese crisis. Among these indications are invitations to Lebanese figures to visit Washington and consult [with government officials] on possible solutions.

[Answer] These invitations will not yield any results. They may, however, give political support to those who are invited, or they may cause them to lose the local influence they have. The war, however, is another matter. Contrary to what some people imagine about the possibility of achieving an understanding or an intra-Lebanese accord, this accord cannot be accomplished as long as the Israeli army first and the Syrian army second continue to be stationed on Lebanon's territory.

[Question] What about President Ilyas Sarkis's visit to Washington? Will it too not yield an outcome to speak of? He too was invited....

Brig Gen Iddih interrupted me.

[Answer] I read this news in a few Lebanese newspapers, but I find this visit unlikely. I also read that Ilyas Sarkis will reassure Hafiz al-Asad that he will not deliver a speech at the United Nations lest he be accused of trying to place Lebanon under international control.

This is truly ludicrous.

Despite my concern for the future of my country, I laughed when I read this news item. South Lebanon has been placed under international control with everyone's consent. I challenge the Lebanese government to ask--and it can do that--the UN forces to leave Lebanon!

Not only that, but the presence of UN forces in the Golan near al-Qunaytirah on Syrian territory is also a form of internationalization.

What is peculiar is that the mandate of the UN forces in Syria is renewed every 6 months without any clamor and with everyone's consent.

Hafiz al-Asad used to oppose the presence of UN forces in south Lebanon. But when he saw that it was in the interests of his country to sign an economic and military friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, he did so promptly. This is a form of internationalization, as long as Soviet military experts can be found alongside the Syrian army. I wonder, why is Ilyas Sarkis afraid of putting Lebanon under international control?

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Ilyas Sarkis is afraid of putting Lebanon under international control because he is in fact afraid of Hafiz al-Asad and not of the UN forces. It is known that internationalization this time supposedly involves increasing the number of UN troops south of the Litani. This would bring about the implementation of two 1978 resolutions: Resolution 425 and Resolution 426. In other words this would get the Israeli forces out of Lebanon's territory.

The anticipated internationalization means UN troops would be sent to the area north of the Litani. Hafiz al-Asad who is supported today by the Soviet Union cannot possibly agree to that. Sending these forces to the area north of the Litani means they will be stationed in the al-Shaqif stronghold which the Israeli army has not yet been able to penetrate to eliminate the Palestinian Resistance, [which is garrisoned there]. Naturally the Palestinian Resistance will turn down this solution and will turn to Syria to defend its presence in that stronghold. What will Syria do then? It will turn to the Soviet Union which will turn to its veto power in the Security Council.

The gist of this is that every step taken in Washington whose aim is not a solution to the Palestinian question will be unsuccessful. In other words, it will not lead to a way out of the Lebanese crisis since the two questions are unfortunately connected.

[Question] It is known that you advocate the deployment of UN forces in various parts of Lebanon. Do you still subscribe to that view?

[Answer] Yes, and I am still calling for it. But when I noticed after the recent Lebanese complaint that the hands of the Security Council were tied with a U.S. veto, if the discussion led to a condemnation of Israel, and with a Soviet veto, if the discussion did not lead to the condemnation of Israel, I decided to call for the creation of an Arab-European force outside the Security Council so we can sidestep the veto. Naturally, this force will not include Syrian troops because Syria has ambitions in Lebanon, and we've seen how the Syrian army behaved recently under orders from its command against Christians and Muslims in Zahle and Tripoli.

[Question] But do you believe this plan can be implemented?

[Answer] The European Economic Council--the 10 countries of the European Common Market--adopted this plan. However, the events of Zahle, the Israeli elections and Begin's recent victory have delayed an investigation into the practical formulation of this plan.

It may be that the trip to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan which French foreign minister, Claude Cheysson will make will prompt the Europeans [to take action] again. But I believe that the Americans prefer to come to a direct agreement with the Soviet Union and not to have the Europeans thrust into the efforts to solve the crisis of the Middle East.

[Question] Reactions to the Saudi peace plan have been varied. Do you believe that the plan inaugurates a post-Camp David stage in the area? How do the features of this stage appear to you?

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[Answer] I believe that any suggestion which is not approved by the liberation organization will not be successful. On the other side of that coin, any suggestion that Israel does not approve of and that the United States cannot impose on Israel will not succeed either.

It seems that the Reagan administration is not as devoted to Camp David as the Carter administration was. Next April, which is the date for the withdrawal of the Israeli army from all of Sinai and the replacement of the Israeli army with multi-national troops, will provide an indication for all the possibilities of the future. If the Israeli army withdraws, then the first step in the Camp David process will have been achieved and the question of the West Bank and Gaza will remain pending [and awaiting a solution]. I do not believe that Begin will agree to a withdrawal from Sinai. This means that the Palestinian question has not been solved.

Mitterand Told Me

[Question] You spoke about Arab and European forces and about Europe's role. By the way, do you believe that socialist France can play a winning hand in the Lebanese crisis in view of President Mitterand's upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia and the tour of his foreign minister in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan?

[Answer] When I came to France 4 years ago I asked to meet with the secretary general of the Socialist party, Mr Francois Mitterand.

When I met with him I found him to be well-informed about the question of Lebanon and the question of Palestinian presence in Lebanon. His interpretation of Resolution 242 was one that called for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories. This has been France's position for a long time. It has also been the Soviet Union's position.

I believe that President Mitterand, who is originally a man of jurisprudence, views Lebanese and Palestinian questions more from the perspective of what is right, of international law and of respect for Security Council resolutions than from an economic perspective.

Personally, I want to be optimistic about Mitterand's policy in the area. It is true that the man is friendly with the Israelis and especially with the Labor party, but President Mitterand has proven that he thinks first along legal lines. As I said, his thoughts are based on justice, on what is right and on international law. We saw how he had stated that his first [foreign] visit in the area would be to Israel, but then he changed his position after Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor in July. His first visit to the area then was to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[Question] Let us go back to the Syrian role in Lebanon. Do you expect an end for that role soon?

[Answer] All the Lebanese people know how the Syrian army entered into

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Lebanon. The Syrian army came into Lebanon at the request of Islamic figures who had met at the home of the country's mufti, the official expounder of Islamic law, in 'Armun early in January 1976, following the well-known events of Karantina. Those who were at that meeting asked President Hafiz al-Asad to help them. At first he refused and said that he had sent the Lebanese and Palestinians weapons in quantities and varieties that outnumbered those which were in the possession of the rightist forces. This was mentioned in his well-known address of 20 July 1976 in the auditorium of the University of Damascus.

It was at the insistence of the 'Armun group that al-Asad sent the Palestine Liberation army, which is subject to Syrian command, to Lebanon. Al-Asad sent that army without the approval of Lebanese authorities. He mentioned in his address how President Franjiyyah had contacted him by telephone, expressing surprise that the Syrian army had entered Lebanon. President al-Asad said that he told President Franjiyyah, "This is a serious matter, and I hope, my dear president, that all the Arabs will understand us. As far as the Palestinians are concerned, our position is firm. As far as the Palestinians are concerned, there is a red line which we will absolutely not allow anyone to cross."

This means that Syrian troops entered Lebanon without the knowledge or consent of President Sulayman Franjiyyah. At that time the minister of the interior, Camille Sham'un objected, indicating to the press that 10,000 Syrian soldiers had entered into Lebanon. The truth was that 10,000 persons in the Palestine Liberation army, which is subject to Syrian command, had entered Lebanon. A statement to that effect was made later by Prime Minister Rashid Karami who had resigned at that time and was merely disposing of business. He made that statement specifically after the entry of the Syrian regular army into Lebanon on the 1st of June 1976. [Karami said], "I was surprised by the entry of that army into Lebanon."

All this indicates that the Syrian army did not enter Lebanon that day at the request of the Lebanese authorities, and I repeat that.

When the battle of al-Jabal between the Lebanese Front and the National Movement began--and the Phalangists were then on the verge of losing the battle--a Phalangist delegation went to Syria to ask for help. Thus the Syrian army entered Lebanon on the 1st of June 1976 while the Christians in particular applauded, for they believed that Hafiz al-Asad would do away with the Palestinians and the Muslims and would ally himself with the Phalangists.

These calculations were not altogether inaccurate. The Syrian army afterwards fired its artillery on West Beirut. Kamal Junblatt had destroyed 4 Syrian tanks in Ru'aysat Sawfar and the people of Sidon had destroyed 17 Syrian tanks in the city of Sidon itself. But 2 years later the tables were turned when Hafiz al-Asad destroyed al-Ashrafiyah, then Zahle. Today the battles between Syrians on the one hand and Lebanese Muslims on the other have been resumed in the city of Tripoli.



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Brig Gen Raymond Iddih paused for a while. He reviewed his numerous notes, then he leaned back, recalling and correcting other events.

[Answer] On 8 July 1976 the National Alliance Front was established at my house. It included all former prime ministers, including Rashid Karami, but excluding one former prime minister, and Muslim and Christian members of parliament. This front had two principal objectives: to prevent partition and to try to get the Syrian army to depart from all Lebanese territory.

According to the information I have today, the majority of the Lebanese people, Muslims and Christians, are opposed to the Syrian presence in Lebanon after they saw how the Syrian army handled them physically and how it handled their funds and their possessions. This army has no respect for the Lebanese citizen, and it behaves as though it were the army of an enemy in an occupied country. Therefore, the Syrian army and Hafiz al-Asad's Syria are in Lebanon against the wishes of the vast majority of Lebanese citizens.

One gets this feeling in the circles of the Palestinian Resistance where Palestinians have suffered considerably from the attitudes of the Syrian government not only in Syria, where this Resistance cannot budge, but also in Lebanon.

This aversion increased when the Palestinian Resistance saw how the Syrian army, the Syrian air force and the Syrian missiles remained motionless or, like ostriches, hid their heads in the sand in view of Israel's raids on Beirut, and specifically on the al-Fakahani section. Israel's raids were carried out under the pretext that there were pockets for the Resistance in that section of the city. Israel's raids spared neither children nor women.

The Palestinian people most certainly cannot be grateful to the Syrian army which entered Lebanon originally to protect them. You ask me, "Will the Syrian role in Lebanon end, and if so when?" And I reply, "The future of the Syrian troops today depends on a decision from the two superpowers or from one of them."

[Question] Brigadier General, some people accuse you of criticizing others and accusing them without coming forward with a plan or a view of a comprehensive solution to the Lebanese crisis. [What do you think of that?]

The brigadier general is surprised by this question and this charge. He asks me, "How can that be? My position has been clear since 1964."

Helu Does not Know Where al-Wazzani Is

[Answer] I've had one plan, and it has not changed. And here we must go back quickly [to the past]. When President Charles Helu decided to divert the tributaries of the Jordan River--and among these tributaries is the source of al-Wazzani so as to implement a decision made by President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, I told Helu who didn't know the location of the al-Wazzani and had not visited the south, "This river originates from the al-Hasbani

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Valley, 2.5 kilometers from the Israeli border. Israel thinks it has rights to these waters which flow into al-Hawlah. If you want to implement 'Abd-al-Nasir's decision, I suggest that you ask U-Thant, the secretary general of the United Nations to send UN troops to Lebanon to protect the diversion operations. If he agrees to send the UN troops, and this is unlikely, we will have UN protection. If he refuses, I would advise you not to carry out the plan because Israel will consider it an aggressive action." Charles Helu turned down my suggestion. Then I proposed to him again that he try to build a dam on the al-Hasbani River, and I told him, "There is a plan in this regard prepared by Ibrahim 'Abd-al-'Aal. Don't call it the diversion of the al-Hasbani River, but rather a utilization of its waters. The al-Hasbani area needs irrigation water and drainage, and the al-Hasbani River originates 20 kilometers inside Lebanon's territory. Israel has no rights to these waters which are 100 percent Lebanese."

And Charles Helu replied, "An agreement has been reached to divert the al-Wazzani: the Syrian army will protect the diversion operations and the Lebanese contractor who was awarded the project contract. In addition, the Arab League has provided all the necessary equipment." On 25 September 1965 digging operations began in the presence of Syrian tanks under Commander Majid Arsalan, who was the minister of defense at that time and who was then at his farm, al-Kharwa'ah. Today, the name of that farm is al-Majidiyyah.

At noon, one Israeli airplane raided the area. It destroyed the Syrian tanks and the tractors of the Arab League; and the contractor fled.

This was the first time I had called for UN troops.

The second time I called for UN troops was when I was minister during the term of President Charles Helu and I was serving in a four-member emergency cabinet that was led by 'Abdallah al-Yafi. This was specifically after Beirut Airport was bombed. I proposed then that we ask for UN troops through the complaint that Lebanon submitted to the Security Council. But Charles Helu did not approve because 'Abdallah al-Yafi was opposed [to that idea]. Muslims then were opposed to the UN troops. This happened before the Cairo Agreement was signed on 3 November 1969. Had Charles Helu been able to persuade al-Yafi and the Muslims, south Lebanon would not have found itself where it is today; UN troops would have preserved the truce agreement between Lebanon and Israel; and the Israeli army would not have had the audacity to attack south Lebanon and all of Lebanon after that. And this is not all.

I opposed the signing of the Cairo Agreement after the Lebanese government and the parliament approved it without knowing what was in it. My party was the only party that opposed this agreement in form and substance.

We opposed it in form because the government and parliament voted on it before they knew what was in it. This is unprecedented in the history of parliaments.

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We opposed its substance because the agreement invalidates the truce agreement and gives Israel an excuse to attack and occupy the south and evict its population, especially the Shi'ite population, from the area. And this is what happened in March 1978.

The brigadier general paused for a few moments and referred again to his notes before going on to say, "The third time I asked for UN troops was after the Israeli attack in March 1978. The Lebanese government did not dare ask for UN troops because Hafiz al-Asad was not in agreement with it. In addition, he wanted to keep Lebanon embroiled in war, and the UN troops would prevent that."

Scandal in the South

[Answer] The only service that President Carter rendered to Lebanon was that of sending UN troops. This was done with the consent of Britain without resorting to the Soviet veto as has been customary. However, these forces were unfortunately not able to carry out resolutions 425 and 426 which were adopted in 1978.

There is another thing too. In the Litani area between Dayr Mimas and the village of Balat there is an area about 9 kilometers long where no UN troops are stationed. The Israeli army can enter Lebanon through this area without confronting these forces. This is of course scandalous.

Today, I am still calling for UN troops in all Lebanon. To avoid the veto I suggested Arab and European forces or multi-national troops, among which would be troops of Arab countries that have no ambitions in Lebanon.

[Question] Other than putting Lebanon under international control, what other suggestions do you have to bring an end to the Lebanese war?

[Answer] First, the Israeli army is to withdraw to implement Security Council resolutions.

Second, Syrian troops are to be withdrawn and replaced by UN troops or by Arab and European troops.

Third, the Lebanese army is to be given the power to carry out its duties toward the Lebanese lawful government on all the territory of Lebanon.

Fourth, with regard to the Palestinians, they did agree in the past on the Tunis Resolutions and they agreed to stop launching their operations against Israel from Lebanese territory. At any rate, these operations are fewer now, and I am hoping that other Arab countries will agree to adopt an agreement similar to the Cairo agreement so I can give my consent to the resumption of the Palestinian struggle from Lebanon and elsewhere.

[Question] The brigadier general stays in constant contact with Lebanese political figures. Have you thought of establishing a broad front of moderate leaders, for example, to include Sa'ib Salam, Rashid Karami and others?

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[Answer] I do not believe in this kind of fronts because I am basically not convinced by present plans for [establishing] accord. I repeat, the conspiracy is still going on.

[Question] What are the first thoughts that come to your mind when we say to you the phrase, "Lebanon's Muslims?" In other words, what do you tell Lebanon's Muslims now after all that happened? Do you have something to say to Muslims on this occasion?

[Answer] Unlike yesterday, there is today more than ever before a tacit, undeclared agreement between Muslims and Christians to reject the presence of the Israeli army and the Syrian army, now that Lebanon has become the land where the dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union is taking place. Lebanon is a strategic post, the gateway to the Orient and an area of contention between the two superpowers. Discussions about accord, the frequent meetings that take place and proposing "local" solutions--all this is done "to pass the time."

The evidence for this lies in the fact that Lebanon's prime minister went to Damascus and negotiated with Hafiz al-Asad about the Lebanese problem after issuing orders that the passes between East Beirut and West Beirut be cleared. When he returned from Damascus, the shooting resumed.

I would tell Muslims, "Accept the only solution now: internationalization. This is because Arabization means the Syrian army stays.

[Question] And what would you tell Christians?

[Answer] There are two groups of Christians. One group supports the liberation of Lebanon from Israel but agrees to the presence of the Syrian forces, and the second group supports the liberation of Lebanon from the Syrian army but agrees to the presence of Israelis on Lebanese territory. This second group cooperates with the Israelis. I would tell them sovereignty is indivisible. I would tell them liberate Lebanon from the Israeli army and from the Syrian army as well.

The only way to achieve that, and I say this for the tenth time now, is to ask for UN forces for all of Lebanon so that the lawful government can build a neutral Lebanese army which would have one commander who would answer to the minister of defense. The minister of defense in turn would answer to the Chamber of Deputies.

[Question] What would you say to President Ilyas Sarkis?

[Answer] I would ask him to go to the United Nations. If he arrives in New York in November, the General Assembly will be in session, and this will give him the opportunity to explain the Lebanese question, to defend it and to ask for UN troops.

But President Sarkis can only act in accordance with what President Hafiz al-Asad wants.

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Did he not become the president because of Hafiz al-Asad? Did he not take the constitutional oath in Shtawrah surrounded by Syrian troops and not in the capital?

[Question] What would you say to President Hafiz al-Asad?

[Answer] One thing: take your army out of Lebanon.

[Question] What would you say to Mr 'Arafat?

[Answer] He has one objective: Palestine and returning to Palestine. To achieve that objective he will agree to sacrifice everything. He will sacrifice Palestinian and Lebanese fighters who befriended him. He was fortunate in finding a hospitable nation.

'Arafat believed that the Palestinian Resistance can triumph over the Israeli army in a few weeks and that, consequently, Palestinians would go back to Palestine. But 33 years have gone by, and the Palestinians are outside Palestine. But Abu 'Ammar persists in his battle, and he threatens the Arabs if they do not help him financially and militarily. He has thus succeeded in his mission and in creating the Palestinian question, but he has not yet regained Palestine.

But the Lebanese people were off their guard, and it was their fault for letting down their guard. Abu 'Ammar is insisting on the Cairo Agreement, and the Lebanese authorities do not dare abrogate it. In return, Ilyas Sarkis is ignoring the Lebanese question and does not want to defend it in the United Nations.

I Will not Go to Beirut until...

[Question] When will you go back to Beirut?

[Answer] I will not go back as long as the Syrian army is located close to my house in the Ministry of Information. It is shameful that the Lebanese government has not been able to replace the Syrian force, which is stationed at that ministry, with a company of the Lebanese army or of the police force. It seems that the Lebanese government has no sense of national dignity, and I cannot do what the state has to do.

Therefore, I decided to transfer my activity abroad in the interests of liberating my country from the Israeli and Syrian armies. I can speak freely abroad, but if I were in Lebanon, there would be nothing easier than having me kidnapped.

[Question] We are on the verge of the presidential elections in Lebanon. Tell us frankly, are you a candidate?

[Answer] It would be shameful for us to talk about the presidential elections now.

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Before the elections, the country must be liberated. If the elections take place under the auspices of the Syrian army, they will be similar to the election of Ilyas Sarkis.

[Question] Let me ask you again, are you a candidate?

[Answer] I am not thinking of the presidential elections. I am only thinking of liberating my country. The major countries, from the United States down to the countries of Europe, are saying that accord must be established among the Lebanese and that they are the only ones who can liberate their country. This is no more than talk. France, for example, despite the fact that De Gaulle was heading the [French] resistance would not have been able to embark upon the battle of liberation in 1944 had it not been for the landing of U.S. troops. I am not asking for troops to descend on Lebanon, but I am asking for UN forces.

[Question] A final question. How do you explain the Israeli attack on the Iraqi reactor in July?

[Answer] Israel would not have had the audacity to carry out such aggression were not the Arabs divided and had it not been convinced that the United States will be satisfied with press reactions to this action that contravenes all customs and laws. It is true that President Reagan suspended the delivery of F-15's and F-16's to Israel, but Israel does not need these airplanes now, and Begin announced that he would get the airplanes these days.

What is shameful is that 150 million Arabs have not been able to create an Arab lobby to rival the Zionist lobby in Washington despite the enormous Arab funds and the oil resources. This is truly shameful. I am hoping that the United Nations in its future meetings will condemn the Israeli aggression of July and will impose penalties on Israel. Condemning such a serious attack is the least that the international community can do.

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LEBANON

BRIEFS

AL-NAHAR DIRECTOR KIDNAPPED--The story whose details have not been published in Beirut has to do with kidnapping the director of the Beirut newspaper, AL-NAHAR. The director of the newspaper was kidnapped by persons who stated they were members of Syrian intelligence. The details of the incident are that five civilians entered the building of the newspaper, AL-NAHAR, which is located in the western area of Beirut opposite the Ministry of Information and asked to see the editor-in-chief. When they were told that he was not there, they asked to see the director, and they were granted their request. When the director greeted them, they asked him to accompany them without putting up any resistance or making any move because his life would otherwise be in danger. He obeyed their orders. They took him downstairs in the elevator, and they left in a U.S.-made car to take him to the area of al-Janah-al-Rawshah. On the way they explained to him that their action this time was a warning not only to him but also to all newspaper employees. They did not want the newspaper to publish anything from now on about the Syrians in Lebanon that would infringe upon the reputation and the dignity of Syria. When the director asked them what had annoyed them and infringed upon the dignity of Syria, they said that one of the pictures shot in the area of al-Fakahani showed a power shovel belonging to the Syrian troops removing the rubble of the Israeli attack. "This picture was printed on the 1st page and it was meant to taunt us." When the director of the newspaper promised he would do what they asked, they did not take him to their destination, but they dropped him in the middle of the street without forgetting to impress upon him that he had not been kidnapped. In the meantime the staff of the newspaper, AL-NAHAR had contacted the presidential palace and apprised the Council of Ministers which was in session of the incident. President Sarkis immediately sent information minister, Michel Iddih and tourism minister Marawan Hamadah to ascertain the accuracy of the report which was soon denied by Colleague 'Aql to obviate the consequences. [Text] [Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 235, 14-20 Aug 81 p 16] [COPYRIGHT: 1981 AL-WATAN AL-ARABI] 8592

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LIBYA

JOURNALIST DESCRIBES RECENT CHANGES

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1082, 30 Sep 81 pp 40-43

[Article by Mohamed Selhami: "What Has Changed"]

[Text] It has been decided. I am leaving for Tripoli, but without any great enthusiasm. It's boring in Libya. That is well known. So, is this a tendency toward masochism or is it rather a wish to see close up where this country stands at present? It is 2 years since I set foot in the country of the people of the Green Book. And for a good reason. JEUNE AFRIQUE is not highly regarded there. What can have changed in 2 years? Qadhdhafi is still there, intractable, impossible to predict, given to episodes of humor. His "third universal theory" continues to inspire the most extravagant decisions, whether they concern domestic policy or relations with the rest of the world. Seen from the outside, Libya resembles a spoiled adolescent who rejects his surroundings, often violently. In the aircraft some memories from my last visit come back to me.

It is 1 September 1979 in Banghazi: 10th anniversary of the revolution. A fired-up crowd was waving pictures of the Guide [Colonel Qadhdhafi] and repeating at the top of their voices the slogans of the Jamahiriya [socialist community]. The pavement of the streets was breaking up under the weight of the tanks, the clouds parted at the passage of MiG and Mirage aircraft. There were also the men. Especially them. Their faces streaming with sweat, their eyes haggard, they paraded by with a Kalachnikov automatic rifle on their shoulders. My heart tightened in the face of this spectacle of a military Libya blended with the Libya of the Green Book.

On 22 August 1981 my aircraft landed. I am resigned to be bored. I am going to see again revolutionary leaders--on their facsimile--who have come from the four corners of the world to make Tripoli their platform. Two years ago I had drunk in their words until I was no longer thirsty. They spoke words ending in "isms" which they distributed to all comers, to every wind. I encountered the first surprise: the airport was sparkling with cleanliness. And I thought that in Libya no one knew how to do anything any more but give interviews! It was better than that: hardly a quarter of an hour after my arrival I found myself in an automobile belonging to the reception service, flanked by a guide with a set smile. No salaams or "Inshallah's," that magic expression rarely fulfilled. This time they gave the impression of being serious.

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This was just an impression, which was going to leave its mark during the days that followed, to give place to the most total kind of mystery. "When will I do this?" "When will I go there?" I tried to insist, but this did not hasten things by one second. Decidedly, the notion of time is not Arabian. Even less is it Libyan. That doesn't stop the buildings from proliferating in magnificent disorder. Some 200,000 homes built in 4 years! This is a record in a Third World, where the problem of urban housing is as sharply felt as that of food. Qadhdhafi has promised a home free to all of his fellow citizens. "Here we said good-bye to the last shack on 3 March 1980," says a placard.

## Contrasts

Here I am again in Tripoli, capital of terrorism, if there is one. Our car just missed a collision with a truck which, in avoiding us, knocked over a street light. The passersby paid no attention, so accustomed are they to traffic accidents. How many vehicles coming and going in all directions, honking, breaking, sometimes colliding! Libya is certainly the most motorized country in Africa.

We are on the Avenue Omar el-Mokhtar. The walls are freshly whitewashed, and the doors of the houses are painted green. This green, symbol of the new Jamahiriya, gives Tripoli a certain air of softness which contrasts with the tone of the slogans---also green---painted on white banners: "We Will Fight to the Death"; "Qadhdhafi, We Will Avenge You!" (already); "Arms in the Hands of the Masses of the People!"

Green Square on 1 September 1981, the commemoration of the 12th anniversary of the revolution. I find myself in a group of about 100 journalists, facing the official stand where well-known visitors are seated: the Palestinian Yasir Arafat, the presidents of Chad and Madagascar, the coordinator of the junta in power in Nicaragua. Two and one-half hours of waiting before finally seeing the author of the Green Book arrive. It is noon. A leaden sun beats down on the crown of the faithful. Escorted by motorcycle police in immaculate white uniforms, mounted on BMW cycles, standing up in his large American convertible, Qadhdhafi arrives, his hands outstretched, and he sits down at the podium. He makes a gesture, and the military parade gets under way.

It is not the immense exhibition of 1 September 1979, but it is still impressive. "Rejoice, Moroccan! It's also your army," a Libyan colleague shouts to me. The side remarks surprises me, of course, and then I realize that Libya and Morocco have been reconciled. I wink at him and I return my gaze to the official platform. It doesn't have many well-known visitors. I note in particular the absences of the Syrian president, Hafiz al-Assad, and the Algerian president, Chadli Bendjedid.

It appears that relations between Algeria and Libya have deteriorated, because of an old border dispute: Tripoli claims a territory of about a thousand square kilometers all along the frontier, beginning with Ghadames. After a dinner, a Libyan minister showed me the map, dating from the time of Mussolini (Libya is a former Italian colony), where a part of the Erg Admer area is shown as Libyan. "It is the same problem as the one involving Algeria with its Moroccan and Tunisian neighbors," the minister emphasizes (in fact, the question has been settled between Algeria and Tunisia). Moreover, in Tripoli I noted a certain hostility toward Algeria. "President Chadli Bendjedid is a liberal, almost a rightist," many Libyans told me.

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To the border dispute has been added the new Libyan position in the Sahara affair. There has not yet been a divorce between Qadhdhafi and the POLISARIO guerrillas, but the latter will no longer benefit from the military and political support of Tripoli in their war against Morocco. Rabat has reportedly received assurances in this sense. That is why King Hassan II has hastened to renew diplomatic relations. The Libyans one meets do not hide their satisfaction. And in Tripoli Moroccans are the object of gestures of esteem--the more so since their courageous resistance on the Golan Heights during the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 has not been forgotten. Colonel Qadhdhafi, moreover, evoked thunderous applause when, in his speech on the 12th anniversary of the revolution, he stated: "We hope that the referendum on the Sahara will go well. And we ask the Moroccan Army and the Western Saharans [Saharoui] to go and fight in Palestine."

## A Change of Direction

Among those attending was a delegation of the POLISARIO guerrillas, led by their secretary general, Mohamed Abdelaziz. The latter has not budged, and his replies to the journalists after the ceremony could be summed up in two words, "We'll see." Apparently, he counts on a change of direction by Qadhdhafi. Meanwhile, no document of the International Congress of Solidarity with the Jamahiriya, held in Tripoli from 28 to 31 August, made any mention of the struggle of the Saharan people. The Malagasy chief of state, an ardent supporter of the POLISARIO guerrillas, was even asked to avoid the subject in speaking before the congress. And President Ratsiraka carefully followed the advice.

"It is not Qadhdhafi who is the source of this change of direction. It is the people," a Libyan officer tells me. He informs me that Libyans and Saharans met in Tripoli in July to debate the question of the Sahara. "This open and democratic debate led us to conclude that the struggle of the Saharans was not as just as we believed." The result: a rapprochement with Morocco.

The Libyan boasted of this and hoped that the same thing would happen with Iraq, Tunisia, and even Saudi Arabia, whose role in the oil market affects their economy. In Tripoli they talk of a boycott orchestrated by the United States, which the countries of the Persian Gulf, Nigeria, and Gabon have joined. The high levels of their oil production and the refusal by these countries to increase prices place Libya in a bad position. Libya has difficulty in selling its petroleum: \$15 billion less than planned for in 1981. And as a consequence Libya will have difficulty in achieving its 5-year plan (1981-1985).

Already certain projects, in the agricultural field in particular, have been reduced in scope, for the lack of foreign exchange! "They want to drive us back in selling our gold. They will not succeed," a minister told me. Qadhdhafi has found a solution: austerity. "We are ready to abandon our cars and walk, to do without imported industrial or food products," he says. Is it also for that reason that Tripoli seems to have lost interest in a certain number of liberation movements?

## Antisovietism

What do the Libyans think of it? Would they accept these restrictions, now that they have acquired a taste for the charms of the affluent society? Beyond the vegetables, the fruits, the meat, there are the automobiles, which have become an

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integral part of their life. There are the home appliances, the hi-fi sets and the video recorders which one finds in practically every home. Qadhdhafi knows this well. That is why he would hesitate to break with the West, and with the United States at the head of the list. It is true that he says he is ready to ally himself militarily with the USSR, but rightly or wrongly he is hardly believed here. That is for the simple reason that the Libyans are viscerally antisoviet, beginning with Qadhdhafi himself. None of those I spoke with, officials or simple citizens, spoke highly of the merits of Russia. They recall that the Green Book attacks Marxism.

In Libya the only things Soviet are the weapons and...2,000 advisers, although the Libyan Army buys its military equipment from all countries which agree to sell it to Libya: France, West Germany, Italy, Brazil, and, until recently, the United States. Thus, the threat by Qadhdhafi to jump into the Soviet camp seems in this atmosphere to be purely technical, if not verbal.

"See our fleet, a real patchwork," I was told when I was traveling in the company of Qadhdhafi and his guest, the Nicaraguan Daniel Ortega, on the waters of the Gulf of Syrte. We had gone to see the Libyan warships maneuver. This was one way to answer the American Sixth Fleet after the 16 August incident, when two Libyan Sukhoi 22 aircraft were shot down. I must say that the only foreign officer whom I met was an American colonel, detached to the naval base at Brega to provide after-sales service for U.S. weapons!

I could not take my eyes away from Qadhdhafi. He has a face of marble, a fixed stare, seldom smiling. One might say that he wears a mask. Before going aboard ship he surprised everyone. Impossible to know why, in front of a petrified Ortega, he hit one of his officers and his director of protocol with his stick. But the crowd began to shout his name, with fervor. No force seems capable of disturbing him. I still thought this when I was leaving Libya, a country of riches and of incoherence, baffling and attractive at the same time...in a word, entrancing.

The Jamahiriya is not to be classified as either to the right or to the left. And this is true, despite a very Western form of modernism and a socialism which is agreeably confused. The notion of capital has been outlawed, since land belongs to him who works it, and a house belongs to him who lives in it. "A producer and not a salaried person," says the Green Book.

## Success

An example: a Lebanese restaurant on the seashore in Tripoli. This was an excellent business for the former proprietor, a native of Beirut, who employed about 20 workers. One evening in autumn, 1980, the workers "summoned" the boss to tell him that the restaurant would henceforth belong to all of them. It was for him to choose: become a stockholder or be fired? The Lebanese told me his problem while serving my meal. Yes, he is now a hotel waiter.

Officially, there is no longer any private business firm. Even the shops have been closed for the benefit of the large stores called "people's markets." There you find everything and not too expensive. The state subsidizes a compensation fund for products widely consumed, both those imported as well as those produced locally. A sheep, for example, is sold to the state for the equivalent of F 1,000.

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On the market it is worth half as much. The Libyans do not have a shortage of food. Qadhdhafi very early became interested in having the land worked. Thus, you can eat lettuce in the Fezzan desert. Sebha, capital of this region, has become a major agricultural center. Water is drawn from a layer of water extending over 220,000 square kilometers, at a depth of more than 200 meters. When you fly over the Mediterranean coast, you note the large green fields. Above Benghazi, you see the Djebel-Lakhdar area (Green Mountain), which represents a success for the agricultural policy of Qadhdhafi.

Another success: reforestation. Some 400,000 trees have been planted in the four corners of the country. On the border with the Sudan about 12,000 hectares of desert have been made fertile. This area was once called the "valley of death." The Green Book has re-baptized it the "valley of life." Life! This word is on everyone's lips. "The Guide has brought us out of misery. Above all don't say that this is thanks to petroleum. There are countries which have petroleum and which are still in misery..."

## Arabism

Qadhdhafi perhaps has many faults, but his social policy is undoubtedly a success. It is the best propaganda in favor of the Green Book. This is a sacred book, venerated by a multitude of Libyans. It is in the name of the Green Book that the young people, girls and boys, enlist in the army. A young man 21 years old admitted to me that he had participated in the assassination of an oppositionist in Rome. "He dared to criticize our Guide. He deserved the punishment," he said by way of justification, looking at me intensely. He said that he was ready to liquidate Anwar El-Sadat, "if that is the wish of our Guide."

The Egyptian president is considered the mortal enemy of the Jamahiriya. Gaafar Nimeiri is belovéd in the same way, because of his relations with Cairo and his support for Hisein Habre.

"We have no expansionist claims to Chad. Our military intervention was dictated by a strategic concern. This country represented for us a danger as long as it was the theater of imperialist operations. We were obliged to defend ourselves." The officer who expressed these views to me is part of the staff of Colonel Radouane, leader of the expeditionary corps in Chad. "And the Aouzou strip?" I asked. He answered with a cynical laugh, "We won't go back. Aouzou is fully Libyan." He who lives will see.

Arabism is a very strong sentiment in Libya. "As long as the Arabs remain divided," Qadhdhafi says voluntarily, "our people will never regain their dignity." It is in the name of dignity that the Libyans say toz [shut up!] to America, that they are ready to die. The attachment to Palestine is visceral here. Qadhdhafi is sincere when he urges the unity of the Arab world. But what disappointments he has had! The hardest blow for him was the Syrian turnabout. Only three months after having accepted the principle of union between the two countries (in Tripoli on 1 September 1980), Hafiz al-Asaad reversed gears.

However, who among the "friends" of Qadhdhafi is really sincere? The colonel has few illusions. Hence, perhaps, the secret of his reversals of course.

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5170

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25

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LIBYA

## BRIEFS

FACTORIES OPENED--As part of the ceremonies organized for the 12th anniversary of the 1 September revolution, Colonel Qadhafi opened various industrial enterprises, among them the El Yorga I fertilizer factory in the Barika region, which the JANA press agency ranks among the country's "industrial citadels." This factory, with a production capacity of 365,000 tons per year, is the third in a series of factories envisaged for the petrochemical industry development program. Colonel Qadhafi also laid the first stone for two new petrochemical factories, among them El Yorga II, with a capacity of 1,750 tons per day, and the second methanol factory, with a capacity of 1,000 tons per day. Furthermore, a toilet soap factory was opened at Janzour. The capacity of this factory is 2,000 tons of soap per year. When the factory reaches maximum production, it will supply 80 percent of the Jamahiriya's needs. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2436] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981.] 9434

PLASTICS CONTRACTS--Libya has just signed contracts totaling 8 million pounds sterling (\$14.4 million) with two British firms for the construction of a plastics factory at Ras Lanuf, on the Mediterranean coast. The order, issued by the Azza-wiya Oil Refining Company, a state enterprise, will be entrusted to Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), which will provide the technology, and to Simchem, a company specializing in large-scale works, which will be in charge of construction. The factory, which is expected to begin operations toward the end of 1984, will produce 55,000 tons of low-density polyethylene per year. This product can withstand temperatures of boiling water and is used to manufacture numerous household and industrial articles, toys, mechanical parts, packaging, etc. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2436] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981.] 9434

OIL FOR GOODS DEAL--Negotiations between the Indian company Kamani Engineering and Libya have been at a standstill since Tripoli's announcement in August that advance payments for the provision of an electric transmission station would be made in oil and not in cash. Before going any further, the Kamani company is waiting for authorization from the Indian Government, which has the monopoly on trade in oil. A special representative from the Indian Oil Company, who went to Tripoli to study the Libyan proposal, considered it negotiable on the price level. Negotiations will continue in New Delhi on the possibility of such barter agreements. It should be recalled that some 10 Indian companies are in the running for contracts with Libya with a total value of some 625 million pounds sterling. [Text]

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ACCORD WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA--Gustav Husak, Czechoslovak chief of state and Communist Party secretary general, left Tripoli on 10 September at the end of an official three-day visit to Libya. During his stay in the Libyan capital, Mr. Husak and the members of the large delegation which accompanied him, had two official discussions with Libian officials, led by Colonel Qadhdhafi. At the conclusion of these discussions, the two delegations signed the text of a draft agreement on bilateral economic, scientific and technical cooperation. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1872, 25 Sep 81 p 2436] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981.] 9434

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