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JPRS L/8790

29 November 1979

# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 47/79)

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

GULF SHAYKHS UNEASY AT THREAT FROM IRAN

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 20-26 Sep 79 p 26

[Article: "Have the People of the Gulf Reached the Point of Saying: 'The Hell of the Shah and the Non-Heaven of Ayatollah?'" ]

[Text] The Iranian dust which blows these days over the Gulf clouds its skies at a time when complete clarity is most needed along with the establishment of relations with Khomeyni's Iran which are neighborly and fraternal, good and pure.

A careful reading of Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah's statements concerning recent events confirms just how seriously the Arab regimes of the Gulf view any internal movements which are backed by outsiders and are aimed at upsetting the relative stability heretofore enjoyed by the Gulf, or at least its western shore.

Shaykh Sa'd said: "The authorities are very carefully observing the irresponsible disturbances and disruptions which have sought to sow discord among the citizens and shake their confidence in the government."

The Kuwaiti crown prince threatened that the government will not be lax in the future and will strike forcefully at anyone who attempts to impair the security of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, an official Kuwaiti source said that a rapid exchange of contacts took place between Kuwait and Bahrain, ending in a call to the foreign ministers of the Gulf states that they hold a special meeting before the end of the month to discuss new conditions which will keep the security of the Gulf states intact and uphold their prestige.

But what has occurred in Kuwait and Bahrain to strain official relations between the Arab states and Iran?

In his recent statements, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Ebrahim Yazdi confirmed Iran's neighborly relations and said that it has no intention of using military force to spread its revolution abroad. He has stated: "We do not want to export our revolution, nor do we want to send armed men to fight foreign regimes."

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But the minister qualified this by adding: "However, we cannot prevent the Islamic revolution from influencing other states, and we have a duty to take the initiative to spread the true Islam and the true Islamic revolution through all parts of the world. No one, no matter who he is, can prevent us from carrying out this course of action."

Yazdi referred to Article 11 of the new constitution, which states: "Islamic politics is based on the alliance and unity of the Islamic states in accordance with the Koran. For the Moslems are one people, and therefore the Islamic government in Iran must struggle to achieve political, cultural and economic unity among the Islamic states."

Ebrahim Yazdi's statements are clearer than all the others, including both officials and private individuals, who raise their voices in the name of the Iranian revolution these days. Still, his words convey some inconsistencies which cause the Arab regimes not to trust everything emanating from Tehran and even to have doubts about what really does emanate from the Iranian capital.

But this pertains to Yazdi's remarks. What about unofficial comments by such individuals as Ayatollah Huseyn Montazeri? He openly urges that Bahrain be annexed to Iran, and says, contrary to Yazdi's affirmations, that Iran's revolution will eventually extend to all the Islamic states.

Why Did the Arabs Oppose the Shah?

The Bahrainis say that the Arabs opposed the shah not only because he was filling the role of American policeman in the area, but also because he was bent on aggression against Arab territory. They consider it unacceptable merely to trade forms of aggression from a chauvinistic Persian desire to expand the empire's territory to interference under the mask of religion.

Bahrain's incidents began when Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali 'Aqri was arrested at al-Manamah airport at the beginning of 'Id al-Fitr as he returned from Tehran where he had met with a number of officials, notably Ayatollah Montazeri, originator of the new appeal for the annexation of Bahrain to Iran.

This incident led to a demonstration by a crowd of 500 people who marched through the streets of al-Manamah to the Ministry of Interior demanding Shaykh 'Aqri's release.

Following this, unidentified persons dared to set fire to the largest movie theater in al-Manamah. No one was injured, however, because the building was empty.

On Monday, 10 September, after things had begun to calm down once again, another demonstration of 100 persons was organized. These demonstrators wandered through Shiite neighborhoods of al-Manamah holding up pictures of Ayatollah Khomeyni until police intervened, using tear gas to break up the marchers. A number of citizens were arrested.

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What Happened in Kuwait?

Meanwhile, a similar incidents occurred in Kuwait, during the course of which authorities dared to arrest Hajj Sayyid 'Abbas Mahri, described as the son of Khomeyni's sister, along with his son, Ahmad Mahri. The father and son are Kuwaities but are of Iranian origin.

Commenting on the arrest of the two men, Kuwaiti Minister of Interior Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah said that prior to his arrest Hajj Ahmad 'Abbas Mahri was summoned to the Ministry of Interior where officials told him that his use of mosques and houses of worship to hold political seminars aimed at sowing discord among the citizens was rejected. In spite of this, he again violated his promise to obey the law by holding a political seminar in one of these mosques.

It is well-known that Mahri, who is Iranian-born but holds Kuwaiti citizenship, has been carrying out extensive political activities in Kuwait since the success of Khomeyni's revolution. Last winter he headed a delegation representing members of the Iranian community in Kuwait to greet Khomeyni immediately after his return to Tehran from exile.

Mahri's arrest provoked a general outcry in Iranian religious circles, causing Ayatollah Montazeri to intervene once again and voice the Iranians' "concern" over the harassments to which Shiite Moslems are being subjected in the Persian Gulf states. The impertinent chairman of the Council of Constitutional Experts alleged: "The movements of Ayatollah Khomeyni's personal representative in Kuwait were restricted, and his son was arrested and subjected to torture."

Kuwaiti and Gulf circles view current developments with apprehension and feel that the moves being made under the banner of religion are occurring in coordination with Iran. The proof of this is Montazeri's acknowledgment that Mahri is Khomeyni's personal representative in Kuwait. The Kuwaitis say that the authorities have the right to make the citizens submit to the laws of the country, and that Mahri is a Kuwaiti and must obey the law.

Some Kuwaiti officials point out that the issue is not limited to the imprisonment of a few individuals. They say that the Persian Gulf area has taken a tough stand against Sadat's measures and Camp David and its decisions, and has been an effective force in the Baghdad summit and in strengthening the confrontation states' resolve materially and morally. Current actions, say these officials, are aimed at opening breaches in the internal front in order to weaken the political positions of the Gulf states.

Is what is occurring now in the Gulf a tempest in a teapot which will soon subside through contacts, mediations and the shared realization that what touches the Iranians touches the Arabs as well--especially since the oil wealth which all of them possess is the object of desire of the greedy?

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Or are there those who really want to blow up the incompatibilities and deepen the conflicts, one day pushing them further than the shah did?

The Arabs of the Gulf do not believe that one day they suddenly began to oppose or provoke Iran, whether the ruler in Tehran was the shah or Khomeyni. It is apparent that the initiative for argument and provocation has always emanated from over there--from the other side of Gulf.

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DIMENSIONS OF U.S.-OMANI MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS ANALYZED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 25-31 Oct 79 p 27

[Article: "The Sultanate of Oman--America's Trojan Horse in the Gulf"]

[Text] AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI received from its Washington correspondent this important report on the Sultanate of Oman's role in the Arab Gulf, whereby it is gradually changing into an American Trojan horse, threatening the Arabs, close to the wells and pipelines of their most important national resource--oil.

Behind a thick veil of secrecy, the American military mission representing the three wings--the Air Force, the Navy and the Army--completed its preliminary 3-week mission to the Sultanate of Oman for the purpose of ascertaining the most suitable sites to build two American bases--one of them a naval-air base on Masirah Island, and the other a land-air base near Salalah.

The mission discussed, with a group of British advisors and experts working for the Sultanate's Defense Ministry on contract or on loan from the British Defense Ministry, ways of strengthening the means of supervising oil communication routes, especially through the Straits of Hormuz. Similar negotiations were also conducted with a number of Omani officials, especially Foreign Minister Qays al-Zawawi, in order to evaluate the urgent needs of the Sultanate's land, sea and air forces, in order to fill the "strategic vacuum" until final agreement is reached on establishing the two American bases and they are built and enter actual service.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's information received from sources closely following the Omani-American contacts indicate that the American mission, which ended its visit to the Sultanate with a lengthy meeting with Sultan Qabus and his advisors, recommended the provision of urgent military aid consisting of six armored Cobra helicopters for the air artillery battery, a high-speed coast guard ship, three rocket-equipped patrol boats, and two light reconnaissance airplanes.

In view of its expeditious nature, this aid will be ensured by the Seventh American Fleet operating in the Indian Ocean, inasmuch as it will not seriously affect its strength, while it will be able to effect a noticeable change with respect to security in the Hormuz Straits region, which American experts

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consider a sensitive region exposed, even today, to the danger of fedayeen acts aimed at the oil tankers which pass through the straits.

In addition to that, in its report to the American Defense Department the mission recommended a fixed yearly budget allocation to strengthen the Sultanate's artillery and infantry wings, and the sending of a mission of American instructors and advisors to work in the ranks of the Omani armed forces.

The legal expert who accompanied the mission discussed with Sultan Qabus and his government staff the draft of a bilateral mutual security treaty between the United States and the Sultanate.

#### The Sultanate's Obligations

According to this draft treaty, the Sultanate would provide the American Seventh Fleet all facilities pertaining to anchorage, supply and berthing at Masirah Island, where the American Corps of Engineers would build a modern naval-air base to ensure a concentrated American military presence for 4 months of the year and an ordinary presence for the remaining 8 months, the dates to be proposed by the American Defense Department.

As for the land base in the Salalah region, it would have a double function. It would be similar to the American observation posts in the Sinai, and in addition it would be a basic land base for the permanent American military presence in the Gulf region, close to the oil wells and outlets.

In that context, the base would eventually be equipped with a huge radar station with a range covering the Gulf in addition to the tripartite Yemeni-Omani-Saudi border area, as well as the oil well regions as far as Kuwait.

The base would be supplied with electronic reconnaissance planes, including Fire Bee planes with automatic directional guidance. These are the planes used in the Sinai to observe Egyptian and Israeli military movements. Israel has three of them, one of which was shot down by the Syrian Air Force 3 weeks ago.

This station would concentrate on supervising Soviet fleet movements in the waters of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab Straits, as well as any South Yemeni land movements and any movements indicating a resumption of revolutionary activities in Dhofar.

The United States will get the two bases on a 5 to 10-year renewable lease, for US\$6.5 million rent each year for the marine base and US\$5 million rent a year for the land base in Salalah, and in return for US\$50 million a year worth of American military and technical assistance to strengthen the Sultanate's defense capability.

The most distinguishing feature of the draft agreement for renting the two bases is that it contains a clause which makes it open to the introduction of "other parties." It is understood that the phrase "other parties" refers to the secret diplomatic efforts which Washington is now making to bring Japan and the

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NATO states into the arrangements for the joint defense treaty with the Sultanate of Oman.

That is, American planning aims at dealing with the sensitive feelings which this form of permanent American military presence will arouse by giving this presence the nature of a partner in a joint international arrangement, so that it is not considered just a unilateral American initiative aimed at indirect intimidation in order to curb preliminary oil tendencies to increase the price of petroleum.

Thus, the goal behind the military treaty with the Sultanate of Oman is to make this treaty a nucleus and basis for a joint military presence by major industrial nations in the region, under the cover of ensuring the safety of oil communications and supplies in the Gulf region. Therefore, this treaty is a step linked with the plan to form a mobile American military force to intervene in the regions where vital American interests are exposed to constant danger.

This is the plan outlined by Former American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who recommended making it open to participation by NATO states, Japan and Canada, on the basis that these states' reservations and fears about the consequences of such participation would lessen in light of escalating increases in the price of oil and in light of the increasing political dangers threatening the security of oil communications, whether because of local conditions in the Middle East or because of Soviet movements in the region. This argument was based on studies saying that the Soviet bloc might enter into the competition to purchase Middle East oil before 1985, because of shortcomings in the plans to expand oil production to meet rising consumer needs in the Soviet bloc states. Therefore, the joint military arrangement is aimed at placing a strong barrier in the face of Soviet inclinations towards Middle East oil.

On the regional level, the American plan aims at bringing in Israel and what it calls the "cooperative Arab states," an expression applied till now to Egypt, which expressed its willingness to participate fully and extensively when al-Sadat sent Vice President Husni Mubarak to the Sultanate 4 weeks ago. At that time, he proposed to Sultan Qabus that a permanent Egyptian military mission and Egyptian artillery reinforcements be sent, in addition to a group of former officers who practiced guerrilla warfare during their service in Yemen.

Sultan Qabus accepted this offer, but it has not yet been fully implemented, in anticipation of an agreement between Washington and Cairo on the permanent financing of this Egyptian joint venture.

#### The Egyptian Fleet in the Gulf

In anticipation of that, an agreement was concluded whereby three ships from the Egyptian fleet would make a friendly visit to Omani waters. This will be the first time the Egyptian fleet has entered the waters of the Gulf under the auspices of a joint arrangement with the United States.

A technical mission from the American Corps of Engineers will go to Oman to draw up the technical details for the bases' installations, and to evaluate construction costs, which are estimated at between \$70 to 90 million at least.

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Many informed observers doubt that the European NATO states will agree to enter into these joint arrangements, in view of the fact that this would negatively affect their traditionally good relations with the Gulf and Iraq. Iraq has headed the prompt, strong Arab regional opposition to the Omani plan to establish a joint regional alliance with the United States, West Germany, Japan and Iran to protect petroleum communications, oil wells and outlets, and has also taken a decisive although unofficial stand on the resumption of Iranian expansionist claims.

In addition, France, by virtue of its special relationship with the Arab oil states and especially Iraq, which supplies it with about 25 percent of its oil imports, cannot participate in this American arrangement. Neither can it turn any European Common Market state in the direction of joining the American arrangement.

Observers fear that the political nature of any European sympathy with American plans will lead to the interment of the idea of holding the proposed conference of Gulf oil states and European Common Market states for the purpose of reaching a mutual understanding for ensuring the continuance of their oil supplies in return for political and technical cooperation.

In this respect, the Arab motive for not rushing into such a conference lies in the Arab states' desire that the European states take a political initiative not tied to the United States. In this context, there has been an understanding that the European initiative must in its first stage fully recognize the PLO and call for negotiations with it as an original party in any arrangements for reaching a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and solving the Palestinian problem.

In any case, French President d'Estaing will become more deeply acquainted with the viewpoints of the Gulf states and their reactions to American military movement which he visits Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar during a state tour early next year.

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INTERVIEW WITH PLO OFFICIAL AHMAD SIDQI DAJANI

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 11-17 Oct 79 pp 36-37

[Interview with Ahmad Sidqi Dajani, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization: "A Question to Ahmad Sidqi Dajani: Have You Met With Uri Avneri?"]

[Text] Dr Ahmad Sidqi Dajani, a member of the PLO Executive Committee and a political adviser to Yasi 'Arafat, and who plays a prominent role in Palestinian diplomacy on the international scene, denies that he met separately with Israeli Knesset member Uri Avneri during the Rome symposium. He affirms that the PLO decided to attend the symposium in the full knowledge that Israeli and Jewish personalities would be participating in it. Following the meeting between Yasir 'Arafat and Kreisky and Willy Brandt in Vienna last July, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI met with Dr Ahmad Sidqi Dejadi, who had accompanied the Palestinian leader to those talks. Today AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI meets again with Dr Dajani following his participation in the Rome European symposium, held in the last weeks of last month. The symposium included, among others, Palestinian and Jewish participants. The symposium caused a big uproar because it was the first meeting of its kind in which Palestinians had met with well-known Israeli personalities publicly and in the limelight of sensational publicity. AL-WATAN-AL-'ARABI asked Dr Dajani about the Rome meeting and why it had caused all that clamor. It also asked him about the latest developments on the Palestinian scene. We asked the member of the PLO Executive Committee, which is the highest procedural committee in the PLO:

[Question] What was the specific aim of the Rome meeting? What did it achieve for the Palestinian cause?

[Answer] The aim of the Rome gathering, for us, was to continue our penetration of the West European arena in order to achieve recognition of the PLO by West European nations. This aim was set forth by the PLO leadership some time ago within the context of its strategy. The Rome meeting was one of a series of symposiums held in Western Europe. I would like to point out here that the PLO, in its move on the West European scene, has attached importance to symposium which embrace European political forces, as well as establishing contacts with West European governments. The Vienna and Madrid visits belong to the second category, while the Rome symposium and the

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Basel symposium, which was held in Switzerland last May, belong to the first category.

[Question] Who sponsored the Rome gathering?

[Answer] The invitation was made by the Italian Association for Friendship and Solidarity With the Palestinian People, a society which was formed more than a year ago and which includes representatives of all the party forces in Italy, including the Christian Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Party. The association also includes other important personalities. This association gave special importance to the preparations for this symposium and called it "the world congress in Rome in defense of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the cause of peace in the Middle East." In so doing the association underlined the dialectical relationship between the two issues. That is to say, there will be no peace in the Middle East without the fulfillment of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The association invited representatives of the political forces of the Helsinki Agreement on Cooperation and Security in Europe, as well as a number of progressive groups which acknowledge the national rights of the Palestinian people. The association invited the PLO to open the debate on the first day of the symposium, and it assigned a period of time for the PLO during the morning to present its views on the topics included on the agenda. There were three topics on the agenda: 1) The national rights of the Palestinian people and peace in the Middle East; 2) the means to fulfill those rights; and 3) Israeli actions in the occupied territories and the status and condition of the Palestinian people under occupation. The PLO accepted the invitation, and my brother Fariuq Quaddumi (head of the PLO's Political Department) was scheduled to attend the symposium, but his busy schedule at the United Nations prevented him from doing so. The PLO therefore formed a delegation and asked me to head it.

I Did Not Meet With Avneri

[Question] Some news agencies have reported that you met with Israeli Knesset member Uri Avneri?

[Answer] I must note here that Avneri's latest statements were a tacit acknowledgement that the news about a closed meeting between us was unfounded. He talked about a meeting within the context of the symposium, which included about 200 participants--including a number of Arab ambassadors. He also said that he attended the news conference which I held and heard an answer which did not mention the question of Palestinian recognition of Israel. He made clear that the contradiction which seemed to exist in previous statements is due to semantics. It is therefore now possible for any observer to know what the true facts are and to be safe from the influence of the controlled media.

As for the presence of Avneri and other Jewish and Israeli personalities at the symposium, this is something we do not deny, but in fact acknowledge.

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The PLO Executive Committee decided to participate in the Rome gathering with the full knowledge that those personalities had also been invited to attend. In fact, the PLO's stand on such symposiums is an old one, taken after the Palestine National Council's meeting in 1977, which endorsed the principle of dialog with progressive Jews who recognize our rights. Accordingly, there were meetings with progressive Israelis, such as Felicia Langer, whose efforts in defending our detainees we shall never forget. The PLO's decision has borne some good fruits in terms of our international political struggle. It has besieged and exposed Zionist lies, and it is now the Zionist elements who evade our presence at international forums.

[Question] If the meeting [with Avneri] did not take place, why are news agencies insisting that it did take place?

[Answer] This is due to a campaign which is targeted primarily against the Palestinian arena. The campaign has been so formulated as to arouse that arena. We all feel uneasy and bothered, and rightly so, by talking about recognition of an enemy which has usurped our homeland. We all are bothered and uneasy, and rightly so, by any use of closed meetings which we have not announced in advance. The campaign was typically designed to sow confusion about those two issues. But I must note here that our arena has demonstrated a level of consciousness which makes us proud, thereby thwarting the campaign. The slight confusion felt by some people was cleared by the statement which set things straight. I was personally touched by the intercession of my brethren in the Executive Committee as well as the Palestinian leadership in general. They all realized that the campaign, among other things, was aimed at our activities in Western Europe, including the Arab-European dialog in which I partly participated. I would only like to add that while I was following the campaign I remembered the question of "ideological struggle" which was explained in detail by the late Algerian thinker Malek Ben Bani in his book "The Ideological Struggle in the Colonized Countries." It made all the more clear to me the role which news agencies play in formulating news and slanting it in the direction they want. Anyway, the campaign measured up to the importance of the Rome symposium, the importance of our participation in it, and the importance of the symposium's outcome. I conclude by expressing our appreciation for the valuable reports which were presented at the symposium and the discussions which took place there, including the presentation by Felicia Langer and the report by Michael Adams about Israeli practices in the Arab territories.

#### The Question of Recognizing Israel

[Question] Is the aim of that insistence on "confirming" your alleged meeting with Avneri and other Jewish and Israeli persons to show that the PLO is ready to recognize Israel?

[Answer] Our position on the question of recognizing Israel is clear and based on our national covenant and the resolutions taken by the Palestine National Council (PNC). Our position rejects this premise and principle because we are the victims, not the conquerors. You cannot put the cart

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before the horse. I made this clear in my statement at the opening session of the Rome symposium, and this position was further explained in all the documents presented by the PLO and the Arab side throughout the Arab-European dialog. Those documents appeared in a book which I published recently, entitled "The PLO and the Arab-European Dialog". I have called on Western Europe to cease bringing up the issue of the PLO's recognition of Israel, because it is improper for Western Europe to speak with a Zionist tongue on this issue.

What is noteworthy in the media campaign is that no question was asked of me during the press conference on the issue of recognition, as I have made clear in my statements. Yet a news agency came out with a report in which this issue was forcibly inserted in one of my answers. This is what the agency reporter says and how he understood my statement.

[Question] What is your evaluation of the outcome of the Rome symposium?

[Answer] The symposium achieved substantial success. The document it issued called for an initiative in Europe to be undertaken by forces which are prepared to cooperate and work concertedly in this regard. It also called for European action to urge the UN Security Council and the United Nations to amend Resolution 242 according to the proposals and recommendations adopted by the UN General Assembly. The document also called for an initiative designed to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon and to help the victims of the war. Furthermore, the document urged that pressure be intensified against the Italian Government to recognize the PLO and to urge it to invite brother Abu 'Ammar to visit Italy. The symposium also sent a cable to his holiness Pope John Paul II urging him to be a messenger for a just, durable and comprehensive peace on his visit to the United Nations and to take the Palestinian question into consideration in his speech (the Pope's speech at the United Nations did include references to all those issues). We have noticed that PLO endeavors with Italian and European forces have caused a change in the position of those forces on the Camp David accords. There is a vast difference between the position taken by those forces a year ago on the Camp David accords and the position they took at the Rome symposium. European forces were represented on a high level at the symposium. I would like here to underline the importance of establishing contacts with those forces, because the decisionmaking process in Europe begins from the base and goes up to the top.

Italy Restricted By European Ties

[Question] Will those contacts result, for example, in Italy's recognition of the PLO?

[Answer] We have conducted widescale contacts in this regard. It is clear that Italy is restricted by its position among the states of the European community. A number of political forces in Italy have urged the Italian Government to invite brother Yasir 'Arafat and underscored the need for Italy to recognize the PLO. I believe that those efforts will continue, and we are quite hopeful that they will go on.

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[Question] It has been reported that Kreisky and Brandt asked 'Arafat when they met with him in Vienna to cease military operations against Israel for a given period of time in order to pave the way for a political solution of the Palestine question.

[Answer] A lot has been said about what took place in the Vienna meeting. I had talked earlier to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI on this issue in the light of my own participation in the Vienna talks. I repeat that I said earlier, that there were no requests or preconditions in the talks. The aim, as Kreisky said at the outset of the meeting, was "to inform the chairman of the PLO of our point of view and to be acquainted with his own point of view on present developments as he sees them." The talks took place within this context, and no requests were made.

We Will Move America's Conscience

[Question] And what about the question of dialog with the United States?

[Answer] We move with full awareness of the nature of the international arena. We have defined our goals in Europe, and we have a goal in the United States, too. Specifically, our goal in the United States is to get through to the popular forces there, and it must be said that we have achieved some success. The change in the position of Black Americans is an important one which will lead to significant results. I expect to see a change among the Hispanic Americans, as well as a change in the attitude of those people who realize that the interests of the American people do not lie in supporting Israeli aggression. We have to struggle to bring about a state of affairs similar to that which developed during the Vietnam war--in other words, to reach the conscience of the American people. We proceed with full awareness of the position of the American Administration--a position which is still hostile to the rights of our people and which still refuses to recognize our existence. Once we manage to get through to the American conscience, we will then be able to influence the political decisionmaking process in America.

[Question] And when do you expect America to officially recognize the PLO?

[Answer] It will take more struggle, sweat and anguish before we reach our goal. I do not expect quick results. But ultimately we will triumph, and we will impose our existence on all the forces which do not recognize us.

We will Establish Our Palestinian State

[Question] You believe, then, that the PLO will be able to win its political battle against Israel. Do you believe that this triumph will culminate in the establishment of a Palestinian state?

[Answer] This will certainly take place. We are on the way to establishing our Palestinian state, and we are moving along swiftly as the isolation of the Zionist enemy becomes more evident day after day. Recently I was following

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a number of studies which came from several European countries and the United States, and they all point to the political successes scored by the PLO. We always emphasize that those successes are due to the sacrifices of our people and to their efforts on the level of armed struggle, as well as to the mobilization of all our energies on the level of political struggle.

Our Interim Goal to Wrest Political Recognition

[Question] But will political action require abandonment of military action?

[Answer] The present Palestinian actions are fully consistent with the requirements of the phase through which the Palestinian revolution is now passing. This is the phase which we metaphorically call the third phase. In the first phase the Palestinian revolution sought to establish its presence and existence, both on the Palestinian and pan-Arab levels. Now the entire world opinion knows about the Palestinian revolution. In the second phase the Palestinian revolution had to establish its official existence in the Arab arena and become the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people, thus embodying both the land and the entity in the absence of our own land and until we liberate that land and regain our homeland. In the third phase, which clearly began after the 1973 war and more specifically since 1974, the Palestinian revolution entered the international arena. This is a normal evolution in the course of revolutions, and it means that we are closer to our objective, because ultimately we will win the recognition of international legitimacy and take our place in the world. We are already proceeding swiftly along that course, as demonstrated by the trip made by my brother Abu 'Ammar to the United Nations in 1974. We have also participated in the nonaligned conference and the Islamic conference and established bilateral contacts with many states. Our moves began in Western Europe, where we established contacts with its governments. As far as the American arena is concerned, we began to exert pressure on the American Government through efforts to influence grassroots sectors of the American people. We have really reached a delicate phase in which we have a specific goal we would like to attain, namely, to get through to Europe. We have, after all, fully accomplished the task of gaining the recognition of the Third World. We are a part of the Third World--indeed, its very heart. We are an integral part of it, and it is an integral part of us. We have also accomplished the task of establishing a close relationship with the socialist camp states, led by the Soviet Union. As I have said, we have also begun our penetration of Europe, and it remains for us to attain Europe's recognition. When this happens, it will insure the isolation of the United States if it fails to acknowledge our existence and recognize us.

All these actions are designed to besiege Israel, because, in our analysis of Israel's conditions, it will not come around unless it is forced to do so. Our course, then, is to wage a political struggle which is complementary to the armed struggle carried out by our people in the most magnificent fashion that any people can display.

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And What After Recognition?

[Question] But will the Palestinians recognize Israel if they win international recognition of their right to establish a state?

[Answer] When this happens, the issue will be taken up by the PNC. The present position of the PNC is to establish an independent Palestinian state on any liberated part of our soil and to exercise the right of deterrence as well as apply Resolution 3236 of the UN General Assembly in all its aspects. Only then will the PNC be truly able to discuss the various issues and to assess the situation. I have already explained my personal view on this issue in my book "The Arabs in the Face of a Changing World" and in my speech before the PNC. My position can be summed up as follows: Any formula which we accept should not foreclose the future goal of a unified, democratic Palestine which we aspire to attain. We may not attain this goal in one step, but we must attain the establishment or the emergence of that state which would preserve the unity of Palestine, insure the establishment of democracy in it, and grant all Palestinians the right to return to their motherland.

[The following is an insert entitled "Avneri: I Met Him...I Didn't Meet Him"]

Uri Avneri is a member of the Israeli Knesset, but he is a member who has made trouble for the ruling Zionist establishment, both in the Knesset and in the press. He is one of the leaders whose campaign led to the conviction of Israeli Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan of connivance with the Israeli officer who committed "war atrocities" during the Israeli forces' invasion of Lebanon last year. Avneri was one of the participants in the Rome symposium. He affirms in a news report carried by REUTERS from Tel Aviv that he has met with Dr al-Dajani several times, and he says that the Palestinian official's denial of the alleged meeting is "a matter of semantics." At no time, however, does Avneri say that he has met separately with Dajani. However, Western news agencies deliberately sought to create a fuss over this matter for well-known purposes. Suffice it here to cite a report by AFP from Rome, dated 24 September: "Addressing Avneri, al-Dajani said: 'Our mere presence together here in Rome, despite the criticism made by some factions in your ranks and ours as well confirms that the time has come to cease acts of violence and that actual negotiations are taking place.'"

What does al-Dajani think? Let's try to quietly read again what he has told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI.

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NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

RELATIVE STRENGTHS, MOTIVES OF PARTIES TO SAHARA WAR EVALUATED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 18-24 Oct 79 pp 32-33

[Article: "The War Between the Gnat and the Elephant"]

[Text] In Erich Maria Remarque's novel, "All Quiet on the Western Front," a soldier huddled in a trench awaiting the unknown says: "This heavy, tension-filled silence, this calm, is a monster that sets one's nerves on fire."

This phrase could describe the atmosphere that overshadows the Western Sahara which constitutes a fluid front with perimeters stretching over an area of 250,000 square kilometers of burning sands which comprise the basic setting of a war of phantoms, the intermittent war between the Moroccan forces and the Polisario battalions.

It is still a war of phantoms, because the Moroccan responses have not yet employed the right of hot pursuit against the Polisario attacks. However, this war could assume a new and dangerous dimension were the Moroccan Army to exercise this right and pursue the Polisario battalions while they are withdrawing to their stronghold located 26 kilometers south of Tindouf, a dispute over the ownership of which was the cause of the first war of Arab brothers between Algeria and Morocco in 1963.

The Polisario's attacks are launched from Tindouf with strengths varying each time from five to eight battalions. A battalion comprises from 60 to 80 men carried on 4 armored Landrovers accompanied by trucks carrying "Stalin organs" and vehicles mounted with recoilless guns.

Recently these attacks have taken on a wider nature characterized by an illogical amount of firepower. This has drawn attention to successive reports that Libyan supplies of modern weapons are pouring into Polisario headquarters in Tindouf, ensuring the Polisario of that firepower coupled with the essentials for rapid desert communications and, consequently, assuring it of a temporary initiative in the "hit and run" war.

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The Polisario have used the breakup between Mauritania and Morocco, Mauritania's withdrawal from the western governorate of (Tirbis) and Morocco's having had to redeploy its troops to launch successive strikes deep in the Sahara and even in Morocco.

However, these were transient victories which were nullified by the effects of the battle of Smara where the intervention of the Moroccan Air Force had decisive effects. It has been established from reports by observers that the Polisario battalions that tried to attack Smara incurred devastating losses. They were wiped out by Moroccan Mirage aircraft which in concentrated attacks pursued them over the desert hills and roads where there was no hiding place and where the attackers' vehicles were turned into steel coffins.

This time surprise was on the side of the Moroccan forces, and the expanded field use of the air force was a factor which turned the situation around. The Polisario, with their limited numbers and scanty sources of arms, could not stand casualties such as those incurred in the Smara battle since, if we can rely on Moroccan figures that the Polisario suffered 800 casualties, we find that this figure represents at least 5 percent of the Polisario forces, as their figures show that they have 15,000 fighters.

The War of the Gnat and the Elephant

A military observer described the open war against the Moroccan forces in which the Polisario leadership became involved through its plan to try to attack Smara as a war between a gnat and an elephant, and so there is no need to pound home the consequences of such a war.

Some 2 weeks after the Smara battle, a tense calm dominates the area, a calm setting nerves on edge in a flood of many pointed questions as to whether the plan for open war that the Polisario is pursuing is a plan which, while violating the principles of guerrilla warfare, is designed to drag Morocco into a clash with Algeria through operations drawing Moroccan responses close to the Algerian border.

The fact is that the specter of such a possibility is weighing heavily on many Arab and Western capitals since the results of the 1963 Tindouf war between Morocco and Algeria ended, practically speaking, in 1970, with the Ifrane agreement which sanctioned Algeria's ownership of the area. However, theoretically, they are not over because the Moroccan Parliament has not yet ratified that agreement and is not expected to do so as long as Algeria is publicly embracing the Polisario.

So Moroccan-Algerian relations are still caught in a vicious circle overshadowed by Algerian fears that Morocco may not have given up its territorial claim to Tindouf and Moroccan fears that Algeria is using the Polisario as a spearhead for a war against Morocco.

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On 25 November 1975, King Hassan II voiced Moroccan fears in this regard when he said: "I expect Algeria to fight me." Then after the bloody (Amguilla) clashes in February 1976, Hassan asked Algeria to choose between a long, open war and a guaranteed international peace.

The (Amguilla) clashes were an expression of the tension in both countries which reached its peak when Algeria opposed the tripartite Madrid agreement to restore the Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania and viewed it as a fait accompli and a partition in the obsolete colonial mode.

Those clashes were nipped in the bud, since reason prevailed on both sides, but the indirect consequences could not be contained, mainly Algeria's embrace of the Polisario, the Polisario's development and the improvement of its strength with various capabilities.

Though in the eyes of the Moroccans the Polisario was nothing more than an Algerian tool in a dispute the goal of which was the Western Sahara and Algeria's reaching the Atlantic, the dispute was not made public, at least on Algeria's part, since Algeria demanded that the tribes of the Western Sahara, comprising not more than 65,000 people, be given the right to self-determination, that is, the right to establish an independent state, and so it was backing the Polisario and trying to get international recognition of it.

The Moroccans, however, responded that the objective was to establish a ready-made mini-state that would be tantamount to an Algerian governorate and aimed at surrounding Morocco on the Atlantic.

The Moroccan Offer

Arising from the Moroccan's belief that Algeria's goal was to get to the Atlantic, Moroccan diplomats made a secret offer through French and African diplomatic middlemen to give Algeria two land corridors across the Western Sahara to the Atlantic.

The offer was to have been the primary subject of a meeting scheduled to be held in a neutral European capital between King Hassan and President Boumediene, but the illness and then death of the late Algerian president prevented this meeting from coming about.

The new Algerian president reportedly saw little good in such a meeting and such an offer on the basis of the developments which had convinced Mauritania to cede its share of the Western Sahara and to sever its fateful tie with Morocco. He felt that these developments would put burdens on Morocco that it could not continue to bear for long, as the peacekeeping operation in the Western Sahara was costing it at least \$1 million a day and, consequently, there was justification to expect a Polisario victory from operations designed to scatter the Moroccan Army and drag it into a long war of attrition. These factors may, to some extent, explain the escalating scope, strength and reach of the Polisario



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operations. However, as one military observer said, what can a gnat do against an elephant?

The results of the Smara battle were decisive in principle. They brought an effective truce in the field that afforded opportunities to multilateral Arab and international mediation efforts with the single goal of preventing developments from expanding and leading to a war between Morocco and Algeria in a form that would set fire to the Greater Arab Maghreb and bring international complications.

The understanding of informed circles is that in a letter which King Khalid sent to Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, he proposed that the Tunisian president make a new demarche between Morocco and Algeria based on holding a meeting between the Moroccan monarch and the Algerian president.

Elsewhere, Paris' urgent contacts set in motion joint mediation efforts to be made by the president of the Ivory Coast, Houphouet-Boigny, and the president of Senegal, Leopold Senghor.

With regard to these mediation efforts, the Moroccans say that everything is negotiable but on condition that this is not detrimental to the Moroccan identity of the territory which the motherland has regained.

In this connection, observers point to the Moroccan popular and governmental unanimity, including various rightwing and leftwing parties, on the principle of the restoration of the Western Sahara to Morocco as a final restoration representing a realization of a national demand based on historical and legal precedents, precedents which had been ratified by the International Court of Justice in its 1978 decision, a decision which reaffirmed that legislative ties and bonds of loyalty had existed between the Moroccan sultan and the tribes of Western Sahara before they fell into the clutches of Spanish imperialism.

Are There Other Solutions?

Accordingly, any mediation infringing upon this principle would encounter powerful and sweeping Moroccan opposition. However, that does not mean that there are no other solutions.

The earlier Saudi mediation, for example, took into consideration underlying economic factors in the dispute and proposed a sort of Algerian-Moroccan joint exploitation--with Saudi financing--of the mines in the (Bouqara) area. At that time, Morocco agreed to the proposal which President Boumediene rejected for moral reasons because doing this would give Algeria the image of a country exploiting liberation movements to reap benefits.

Apparently one of the solutions put forth for discussion is one that would provide for recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara in return for permitting the return of the Polisario elements, even though they would be capable of dominating the autonomy system.

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Observers feel that this solution could lead, with no complications, to Algerian-Moroccan cooperation in joint exploitation of the mineral wealth in the Sahara and to realization of a plan to give Algeria two corridors across the Sahara to the Atlantic, considering them free corridors. Everything is negotiable but everything is explodable. The inevitable coming clashes between the Moroccan forces and the Polisario will determine the practical developments in a field where the drums of war echo, a war that cannot go on as a contained dispute between brothers because international strategic considerations, which imposed a sort of relative neutrality upon the parties directly and indirectly involved in this phase, will intervene to end this neutrality and transform it into alignment with one of the sides.

In this regard, it might be appropriate to take a quick look at some specifics concerning military strength in the theater of events according to an excellent report from the Institute of Strategic Studies in London which provided the following details:

#### Moroccan Military Forces

Developments required an expansion in strengthening the Moroccan forces, and the Moroccan Army now comprises more than 90,000 troops in addition to 30,000 militia troops.

The land army comprises around 80,000 troops and includes about 100 Soviet-built T-54 tanks, 50 MX-30 tanks, and 120 French-built MX-12 tanks, in addition to more than 80 American-built M-48 tanks. It recently obtained additional quantities of these tanks and of armored personnel carriers. In addition to traditional field artillery, Morocco has 250 anti-aircraft guns, 210 anti-tank guns and 250 armored personnel carriers.

The air force consists of 5,000 troops and comprises 60 F-5 and Fouga Magister fighters, as well as 50 Mirage F-1 interceptor aircraft (noting that Morocco now only has 18 F-5 aircraft), 8 Hercules C-130 transport aircraft and 40 helicopters.

The navy totals 3,000 troops, some of whom are deployed in ground battalions and launchers, and employs a destroyer, five cruisers and two coast guard vessels. This service was recently reinforced with a number of torpedo boats.

#### Mauritania

Prior to Mauritania's departure from the arena of the Saharan dispute, its ground forces had reached a total of about 12,000 troops, this increase having been accomplished with Moroccan and Arab aid.

#### The French Military Presence

France has a presence close to the area of conflict, but it is still a token

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one and is limited to a total of 65 military instructors and advisors who were released by Mauritania.

France maintains a strong staging point close to the area in Cap Vert near Dakar; and this staging point is considered one of the most important army military bases maintained by France on the African continent. Stationed at this base and the four other bases (the Djibouti base, the Abidjan base in the Ivory Coast, the Libreville base in Gabon and the Ndjamea base in Chad) are squadrons of Jaguar and long range Transall aircraft. In addition to these aircraft, there is a French force permanently stationed at the Cap Vert base comprising more than 1,200 troops and the command of which comes directly under the orders of the French army chief of staff.

#### The Polisario Forces

There are no reliable statistics on the Polisario forces and, therefore, estimates vary from 5,000 to 15,000 troops using the Tindouf area as their primary base. Most of their weapons are limited to French-made MAS-36 rifles, but they have recently received significant supplies, reportedly from Libya, most importantly Soviet-made mortars and anti-tank missiles. The Polisario have used these arms extensively in their recent operations, which indicates that they are confident of continued supplies.

#### The Algerian Military Forces

The Algerian land, sea and air forces comprise 69,300 troops permanently under arms, 100,000 reserve troops and 10,000 gendarmerie.

The ground forces, which comprises 61,000 troops, has 400 tanks of various types, including 100 Soviet-made T-34s plus 50 French-made light MX-12s. The missile battalions in the ground forces have significant numbers of SAGGER and FROG-4 missiles supplying firepower to the artillery battalions, which have recently been reinforced with additional batteries.

The air force has 3,500 troops and 182 combat aircraft, including 100 MIG-15, 17 and 21 fighter aircraft, 40 IL-28 and Sukhoi bombers.

The navy numbers 2,800 troops and has 6 sub-chasers, 6 STYX missile launching ships and 12 torpedo launching vessels, in addition to a number of coast guard vessels.

The Ministry of Defense's budget was increased by 20 percent in 1976.

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EGYPT

GHALI INTERVIEWED ON SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFRICA, PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY

LD151539 Milan L'EUROPEO in Italian 15 Nov 79 pp 39-40 LD

[Interview with Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butrus Ghali by Alessandro Silj in Cairo: "Africa Is Being Divided"--date not specified]

[Text] Cairo--Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butrus Ghali was the principal Egyptian negotiator in the agreements with Israel. He has a university education, is president and driving force of the al-Ahram International Study Center and only entered politics recently. He is a Coptic Christian and in addition has a Jewish wife and did not start from a position of strength in politics. Nonetheless his personality soon stood out and Ghali even managed to win the respect of his adversaries by the strength and consistency with which he led negotiations with Israel. In this interview given to L'EUROPEO just before a long tour of African capitals Butrus Ghali assesses Soviet policy in Africa and the issue of autonomy for the Palestinians.

[Question] You have denounced the danger of the Soviet presence in Africa on many occasions. What led you to adopt such a clear position on that problem?

[Answer] I am particularly worried by the lack of awareness of the Soviet threat not only among those directly involved--the African countries--but also in Europe and the United States.

[Question] Nonetheless in a recent statement to the Congressional Committee for African Affairs U.S. Under Secretary of State Newson, referring to the presence of 41,000 Soviet and Cuban soldiers on African soil, clearly denounced the threat they represent to peace.

[Answer] Newson's statement does not alter my view. Saying that you know a fact does not necessarily mean that you are aware of its consequences. It is one thing to know that a given situation exists and another to want to and know how to react. I am simply saying that if the current trend continues we will move toward Africa's division into two camps, the Marxist camp and the anti-Marxist camp, with harmful consequences for all.

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[Question] You also mentioned the Africans' lack of awareness of the Soviet threat. Perhaps it was the example of Egypt, which in 1972 expelled the Russian "advisers" little more than 1 year after the 1971 Soviet-Egyptian agreements, which convinced the other African countries that the Soviets are not, after all, so very dangerous since, in your case, they agreed to leave.

[Answer] I would point out that not all African countries could afford to follow the example of Egypt--a country, do not forget, which has 5,000 years of history.... The fact is that the Russians learned the appropriate lessons from their past experience. They have refined their strategy. Today, as soon as they set foot in a country they take care to set up political parties and act on the basis of the political structures of the host country. It is no longer possible to talk merely of a Russian "presence" but rather of "penetration" in all directions....

[Question] Is there any possibility of an African country fulfilling a military role in Africa similar to that of Cuba but on the opposite side?

[Answer] No African country would agree to play such a role because it would mean becoming the mercenaries of a great power. Africa should be able to run its own affairs autonomously, with its own forces and without external interference. For example, look at Nigeria's military intervention at Chad's request....

[Question] However, there was also Tanzania's military intervention to Uganda's detriment. Are you in favor of that type of unilateral intervention?

[Answer] Certainly not. We condemn it. However, it remains a local conflict and as such is less serious than and preferable to an international conflict.

[Question] Experience shows that a conflict between African countries rarely succeeds in remaining a local affair and that African regimes often accept or seek foreign interventions. Hitherto Soviet interventions have proved more effective than Western interventions. Do you think that that is a factor in the spread of Russian influence in Africa?

[Answer] That is not the problem. It has to be admitted that when we are faced with an intervention by a Western country, everybody in Africa protests. However, if the Soviets or Cubans intervene nobody really dares to condemn it.... Perhaps that is because the West, especially Europe, has a colonialist past to be forgiven and any intervention on its part is automatically suspect.

[Question] The last decolonization battle is being fought in southern Africa. If one of the great powers were to succeed in having a decisive say in solving that problem it would probably secure a lasting influence

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over the whole continent. Do you think the West has a role to play or do you think that in this case too it is preferable for the conflict to remain "local" without foreign interventions?

[Answer] Let us address the facts. There are outside interventions in the case of southern Africa and we should take them into account. Mozambique and Angola are already communist. If the West continues to simply observe and if the communists establish themselves in southern African countries too, we must seriously consider the possibility of the "whole" of Africa becoming communist.

[LD151541] [Question] You are preparing to visit many African capitals. Will you discuss those matters?

[Answer] The main aim of the meetings I will have in those countries is to explain Egypt's policy in the Middle East conflict.

[Question] Do you believe the Camp David agreements are still valid?

[Answer] We intend to honor them and are confident that the others will honor them.

[Question] What can you tell us about the problem of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and of autonomy for the Palestinians?

[Answer] Many inaccurate things have been published about that question. In our view the autonomy which Egypt is proposing is not a final solution. It is a starting point. It is a framework agreement which would be offered to the Palestinians. It would then be up to them to use it to negotiate the subsequent stages. In other words we are talking about a "minor" autonomy--an initial step.

[Question] With or without the PLO's participation?

[Answer] The PLO's agreement is essential. However, first the Palestinians, the Palestinian people must be convinced that it is in their interests to support that attempt.

[Question] How do you think you can succeed?

[Answer] They must be convinced that it is a gradual and slow process but that it should nonetheless be undertaken because there is no alternative. For the Palestinians to be convinced that such a process should be supported, certain conditions are necessary. Israel must abandon the establishment of new settlements, decree an amnesty and release political prisoners and remove military garrisons from the cities: In short, it must create an atmosphere of trust which does not exist at the moment.

[Question] Therefore the success of this attempt depends on Israel?

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[Answer] Yes.

[Question] Do you think that Israel might be prepared to take the steps you have mentioned?

[Answer] Europe can help us in this matter. Israel is sensitive to international public opinion. The EEC resolution is a constructive contribution. If necessary we will even take the matter to the United Nations.

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IRAN

FOREIGN MINISTER SADR STATES POSITION ON SHAH'S EXTRADITION

LD141609 Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 12-18 Nov 79 p 58 LD

[Telephone interview with Iranian Foreign Minister Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr from  
by: Pierre Blanche from Paris on 7 November: "Bani-Sadr: We Will Not Keep  
the Hostages"]

[Text] LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: What does the occupation of the U.S. Embassy  
mean to you ? Do you really believe that the Americans are going to extra-  
dite the shah?

Bani-Sadr: I will repeat to you what Imam Khomeyni has just said: He will  
not receive any U.S. delegation until the United States agrees to extra-  
dite the shah.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: You are not serious?

Bani-Sadr: The Americans were in the habit of extraditing Iranian opponents  
in the shah's days. I see no reason why a government which claims to uphold  
human rights would welcome a criminal.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: But you know quite well that he is ill.

Bani-Sadr: Well, he will be given treatment. Or let the Americans treat  
him.... We will give them time if they give us an official promise to ex-  
tradite him. Of course, we could not wait for years.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: What do you intend to do with the hostages? Surely  
you are not going to kill them?

Bani-Sadr: The hostages are not a means of exerting pressure. I do not  
think we will keep them. I personally am not in favor of that sort of action.  
We have other possible methods of exerting pressure. Furthermore, we are  
examining that question at this very moment.

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LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Are you considering an oil embargo?

Bani-Sadr: I cannot rule out that possibility. However, above all we can also make revelations on U.S. interference in Iranian affairs. We have a great deal to say on that subject. Why not create a new Watergate in the United States on the subject of Iran?

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: You are referring to the documents which you found in the U.S. Embassy?

Bani-Sadr: To that and to other information we have.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Do you realize that you are cutting yourselves off from Western public opinion which cannot accept either the seizure of hostages or the extradition of a dying man?

Bani-Sadr: It is not a group or a commando unit which has seized hostages. It is a whole people who, by occupying the U.S. Embassy, are showing international public opinion that they wish to control their future and have their independence. As for the shah, what would you have said if Hitler had gone to Switzerland for treatment after the way? The shah is Hitler. He is worse than Hitler. You were in Iran. Remember how many people were killed every day last year.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: What do you think of Bazargan's resignation?

Bani-Sadr: Things are clearer now. The government's prestige had been diminished. The former government's policy was a reformist one both at home and abroad. Today the people are no longer passive, as they were before. The occupation of the U.S. Embassy shows that if the government does not do its duty the people take action themselves.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Do you not fear that Bazargan's elimination might encourage the concentration of power in the hands of the clergy alone?

Bani-Sadr: I do not believe that that is a danger. Quite the reverse. Conditions are now right for cooperation between the progressive mullahs and the intellectuals.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Does that mean there are reactionary mullahs?

Bani-Sadr: There are progressives and reactionaries in all spheres.

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Let us return to the U.S. Embassy....

Bani-Sadr: The United States refuses to understand that a new chapter has opened. It must understand it. As for the hostages, I repeat that we are trying to settle the question as quickly as possible.

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IRAQ

IRAQ ASPIRES TO PLAY MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE IN REGION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 4-10 Oct 79 pp 24-25

[Article by AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's correspondent in Baghdad: "Baghdad Prepares to Play a More Effective Role in the Arab Arena"]

[Text] What does Iraq look like today, having reached the threshold of the 80's? To any neutral observer, the picture from inside Iraq looks bright and radiant, and promises this country an effective role in the Arab arena. Iraq is fit to play such a role because of its huge industrial base, enormous wealth, and young leaders who possess an ambition equalled only by their boundless self-confidence and deep-seated belief that the Arabs must finish building the edifice of their national unity--they being a large nation and perhaps the only such [large nation] that still has not reached this sacred goal.

Baghdad--From AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's Correspondent

The educated, or cultured, Iraqi is a reader. An avid reader. Evidence of this is shown by the high rate of sales of books of intellectual and cultural content that are published here or come from foreign countries. The high rate of sales of local and other Arab newspapers and magazines also testifies to this fact.

The average educated Iraqi has a high level of awareness and a high degree of perception, a fact which is indicated by his literary taste and his special passion for poetry.

Nevertheless, there is a high rate of illiteracy in Iraq, perhaps above 60 percent. This illiteracy--besides being, in itself, one of the glaring features of backwardness which has forced the illiterate people to live outside the mainstream of the nation's life--has been a source of irritation and a constant problem for the Ba'th Party regime since it came to power in this Arab country 11 years ago.

This situation, during the last few years, has brought the authorities to the point of admitting that this high rate of illiteracy has begun to be

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incompatible with the country's ambitious goals for its plans of development, and with the rapid economic and industrial progress that Iraq has achieved under the administration of the Ba'th Party. Also it is incompatible with Iraq's status and the role it is required to play, especially on the national level.

Consequently the energies of the [Ba'th] Party and the government's educational and administrative apparatus have been mobilized to quickly eliminate illiteracy. It is not the anti-illiteracy law, which was promulgated last May, that has been the decisive factor in promoting this change. It is a confirmed fact that it has been a well thought out, practical plan of action that has enabled this law to be carried out so that it has become an existing reality and not merely a law on the books.

Stirring Up the Citizens' Fervor

The anti-illiteracy campaign has directed its appeal toward the emotions of the Iraqi citizens in order to stir up their fervor and ability to excel, and it has made clear to them the great step forward which learning to read and write will give to them.

In addition to all that is the role of punishment as a deterrent and also as an incentive. The penalties for those who refuse to participate are fines and imprisonment. Even the imprisonment does not exonerate a person from the crime. Even when behind bars he has to learn to read and write. Today there are 2 million Iraqis between the ages of 15 and 45 who have begun learning to read and write for the first time in their lives. And they are being taught by 75,000 male and female teachers. They all go to more than 28,000 schools which are located high up in the mountains, in the desert, and along the banks of rivers. Television also helps the campaign. And the government offers all the necessary instructional materials including books, notebooks, and visual aids.

Today the Iraqi authorities can be proud of the fact that Iraq is in the front ranks of the countries which have achieved brilliant success in combatting illiteracy. This year Iraq received the UNESCO prize for its successful campaign. The law is severe. Persons who refuse to participate are imprisoned for a week and are fined 10 Iraqi dinars (about 30 dollars). And whoever claims that he has learned to read and write, and is still illiterate, receives a penalty three times as stiff. And whoever exploits the program for his own private gain is fined 10 times as much and his term of imprisonment goes up to 2 months.

The educational program is practical to a large degree, in addition to being a source of guidance. The beginner not only has to learn reading and writing. He also must learn basic facts about the history and geography of his homeland, the Arab world, and about his Arab nation's hopes, aspirations, and suffering.

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The implementation of the anti-illiteracy program is overseen by a higher council which includes representatives from the party, the armed forces, and various government agencies.

What is the Meaning of This Determination to Eliminate Illiteracy?

This stubborn insistence on getting rid of illiteracy in Iraq at such a rapid pace--what does it reflect?

Actually this insistence on eliminating this chronic phenomenon of dreadful backwardness is the embodiment of a very deep desire on the part of higher Iraqi authorities, in particular the Iraqi president, Saddam Husayn, to see Iraq make great progress in its development, in just a few years, utilizing the revenues from its enormous oil wealth.

This acceleration in eliminating one of the painful signs of backwardness is to a great extent harmonious with the young Iraqi president's fervent desire to create a society which is strong, firm, coherent, which possesses awareness, and which will serve as the foundation on which [Iraq] can undertake to play a stronger, more effective, and more vital role in pan-Arab affairs.

Iraq, according to Saddam Husayn's view, is a strong country. It is strong because of its tremendous resources, and strong because of its human potential.

Under the leadership of its two presidents, al-Bakr and Saddam Husayn, during the past 10 years, Iraq has been able to put an end to the factors of political unrest which were dissipating its tremendous potential and limiting its capability to play its role both nationally and in the Arab world. The political stability which Iraq has begun to feel very noticeably since 1973 or 1974 has helped the country greatly in its efforts to renounce many of the methods which it was forced to employ in order to settle its political and social conflicts.

Saddam Husayn's Leadership

His active and flexible role materialized in prominent fashion in the mini summit meeting in Baghdad last year. The regime is no longer a prisoner of slogans. Saddam Husayn's leadership--which is fundamentally based on his self-confidence on the one hand, his deep-seated faith in his people on the other hand, and his absolute commitment to the principles and regime of the [Ba'th] Party--has freed his youthful will from many of the abstract and theoretical barriers which perhaps have become a burden, accumulating daily, and merely a shackle, limiting his capability to act, rather than being an incentive, food for thought, and a source of inspiration.

Today Iraq, due to this pragmatic policy of flexibility, and without straying from its basic, fundamental principles, is playing a prominent role in the Arab arena--a role which it has never played before in its modern history.

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Saddam Husayn today deals with various Arab regimes without any problem and irrespective of the differences in economic and social outlook from one regime to another. Perhaps a clear indication of the effectiveness of this role would be to point out the role of 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim's Iraq in the [Persian] Gulf and [compare it with] the role of Saddam Husayn's Iraq, 20 years later, in the same area.

Iraq is no longer the reckless, frivolous, and primitive threat that characterized it under the regime of Qasim. Today Iraq represents strength, support, and a factor of stability and stabilization. And it is a fierce shield for the Arab character of the area, protecting it from those who would threaten it or stir it up.

Also Saddam Husayn's leadership--in its refusal to bargain over Sadat's Camp David policy because that would then mean accepting the fact of bargaining over its principles and convictions--is at the same time self-confident and strong enough to enable it to overcome all the secondary complications that usually dominate the interwoven, interlocking relationships between the Arab countries.

The Characteristics of Genuine Leadership

One important quality of leadership is that which places the higher national interest and strategy on a much higher plane than the level of egotistical self-interest.

Thus it is not unlikely, as a result of keeping this strict rein on emotions, that Iraq and Syria will once again resume their joint path which, they agreed upon at the end of last year. This is because the Ba'th Party, in the final analysis, is a party of [Arab] unity, and, as an authentic party which is true to its principles, it cannot allow unity to remain [just] a slogan, unable to penetrate barriers and borders.

What does Iraq look like on the threshold of the 80's? As a neutral observer, I can only say that Iraq today is a strong and rich nation, and has acquired a young, experienced leadership that has forged its way via brilliant party experience. And this leadership is looking forward, in the 80's, to playing its national role with the same capability with which it has built its economic and industrial base in the 70's.

Perhaps Saddam Husayn today feels that he has the power, youth, experience, and confidence to qualify him to assume the role that is appropriate for Iraq and its party to play in the Arab world, in order to serve a large nation [the Arab world] which unfortunately is still fragmented and has not yet completed its national unity.

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MOROCCO

MOROCCAN LEFT CRITICIZED FOR ATTITUDE TOWARDS KING'S POLICIES

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 15-28 Oct 79 p 54

[Article by Ali Gharbi; passages enclosed in slantlines published in boldface]

[Text] In the Kingdom of Morocco, at the level of discussion, public statement and other motions, unanimity about "the defense of territorial integrity" has become a slogan which is more than ever the order of the day. It can even be said that the nationalist overbid is increasing at the same rate as the accumulation of diplomatic failures and military defeats.

However, as time goes on, that unanimity has been emptying itself of its contents and looks more and more like a whitened sepulchre. The "recovery of the Sahara," that magic formula which, for some, concealed all problems, and for others, worked them out miraculously, appears to be aggravating them to the point of becoming unbearable.

Today the Moroccans find themselves again face to face with their reality. It is the old reality of a government and its choices. It is this situation in which the fronts of the struggle are being formed, in which the militants are appearing again, but also in which conflicts among divergent interests are springing up, dismissing the proclaimed unanimity somewhere else, very far to the south.

/Antinational Economy/

On the economic scene, the weight of the war is certainly considerable. But that does not constitute the essence of the problem which goes back to the government's choice of an antinational economy, an economy dependent on imperialism and which will be paying for the world crisis from now on in all its aspects. First of all, with the galloping inflation which has been adding to the misery and dangerously reducing an already weak internal consumer level; the unemployment rate, intensified this year by poor investments and a decrease in exports to the EEC countries in crisis; the probable if not certain return of some 30,000 Moroccan workers whom France no longer wants; the serious food situation, product of a very unpopular farm policy.

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Thus, this year Morocco, which used to export wheat, will have to import 30 million hundredweights--half of its consumption--and pay the stiff price for them imposed by the United States.

On the political side, the reality of the rifts is likewise shattering the belligerent unanimity proclaimed regarding "Great Morocco." Rifts between Istiqlal and all the other political structures concerning problems of education. In June, there was the scandal of the bacculaureate (which was finally guaranteed).

In September, the issue was the return to class where 2,120,000 children were excluded from their schools. There were also conflicts between Istiqlal and USFP [Socialist Union of People's Forces], with respect to the government's Arab policy, and its collusion with President Sadat; between the USFP and the PPS [Party of Progress and Socialism] regarding the labor union struggles, where the two central powers came into conflict: the CDT [Democratic Labor Confederation] supported by the USFP and the UMT [Moroccan Labor Federation] aided by the PPS (Ali Yata's communists).

These rifts even appear within the main opposition structure, the USFP. Everything that separates that party's main currents is so obvious today that one might easily wonder what could possibly bring them together. For what is there in common between the leader Abderrahim Bouabid who, according to the dedicated formula, "knows nothing about Morocco except the main highways"; the intellectuals who are linked to the socialist international--but mainly to Shimon Perez whom they met in Lisbon--and to Bourguiba; the members of the administration who, it is said, are very close to the government and to Minister of Interior Driss Basri; and, finally, the base level militants, the declared enemies of the government and its choices?

These base level militants run a great risk of being deceived when they understand Abderrahim Bouabid's real objectives. In fact, the latter is undertaking a campaign throughout the country, and when he proclaims that the king must be relieved of the Sahara affair which, according to him, is the people's business, isn't the director of the USFP looking enviously to the prime minister's chair, which might very well become vacant? The real prime minister, Maati Bouabid, could be entrusted with a subordinate administrative post, while Abderrahim's reign unfolds in great ceremony--at least so the rumors insist--with the liberation of political prisoners. As for M'hamed Boucetta, minister of foreign affairs, who has up to now shone for his incompetence, he would also be shelved.

That would all be part of the plan dreamed up by Hassan, which is to saddle his opposition with the responsibility for combats lost in advance. And for Mr Abderrahim Bouabid to rush to meet that divisive dream!

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/What about those "who have disappeared?"/

Finally, with respect to repression, the atmosphere is dismal. Definite threats hover around a new ruling on the right of public employees to strike. Sanctions taken against the teachers and health personnel during last winter's conflicts have not always been levied. The trial of Omar ben Jelloun's assassins has, 4 years after the murder, always been postponed to a later time. Maknes' trial is still at a deadlock, and those accused are beginning their third year of preventive custody. Besides this, there has been no news about all those "who have disappeared," --the military from two coups, those hundreds of Sahraouis who were halted on Moroccan territory, the militant Hussein El-Manouzi ....

In return, the councils of war are proceeding at a good pace (Major Azelmat has been executed) and so are the secret assassinations within the army of Sahara. The prisons are full. Besides the "official" prisoners, condemned at various political trials to the harshest penalties, there are all those people whom the government rounds up, hauls in, detains, and who, after being so often ignored, stagnate--for how long?--in different prisons of the kingdom.

Will all this suffering and injustice--death, starvation, torture, imprisonment, illiteracy--result in rallying in their struggles the militants whom the government had deliberately wanted to divide, blind and paralyze on the Sahara question? That is the main question for this 1979 return.

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TUNISIA

DESTOURIAN PARTY LEADER DISCUSSES NATIONAL, ARAB ISSUES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 18-24 Oct 79 pp 19-23

[Interview with Mohamed Sayah, Director of the Destourian Socialist Party in Tunisia by Nabil Maghrabi: "Mohamed Sayah Says, 'Military To Have No Political Role in Our Country'"]

[Text] This lengthy interview with Mr Mohamed Sayah the director of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party [PSD] in Tunisia lasted for 5 continuous hours during which different questions that are pending inside the country and in the Arab world were discussed.

Sayah speaks here for the first time with such candor and such inclusiveness since the Tenth Party Conference last September came to an end.

Not only does the interview-discussion contain an evaluation of the experiment of the regime as a whole, but it is also an attempt to dot the i's and cross the t's with regard to the high-tension issues of democracy, the multiplicity of parties, the succession, the role of the military in the regime, the legislative elections next November, the possible dialogue with the opposition, the future of the regime, and political prisoners, etc. The experiment of the regime is facing these issues today more than any other time in the past.

The director of the party also defined Tunisia's position on Arab questions [such as] the problem of unity, relations with neighbors and specifically, Libya, Camp David and the Arab League in its new formation, etc.

Mr Mohamed Sayah needs no identification. The world press describes him as Bourguiba's "strong man" and sometimes as "the regime's stern man."

When one asks him his opinion about such designations, he smiles with his usual charm and replies, "This is the opinion of the press. But I do not hide the fact that I am one of the advocates of the Bourguiba mode as a course of government and as a political attitude that would push Tunisia forward in the march towards development and prosperity. There are numerous examples along these lines."

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The interview with the director of the party is quite enjoyable. He is a consummate politician; he knows how to tackle an embarrassing question with the same skill with which he avoids "the blows" of his political opponents secretly and in public.

Some people were counting on the emergence of Sayah as a weak figure from the Tenth Party Conference. Actually, the outcome of the conference was not completely in his favor. When one asks him about the reason for this, he replies with his well-known diplomacy and with this smile, which he rarely hides from his interlocutor, "This is politics, and politics consists of battles and rounds."

He is a skillful politician. His "opponents" censure him for his intransigence and for the fact that he does not make things easy. Some of them even accuse him of "controlling" others and of imposing a kind of dictatorship within the party. But he denies this charge and affirms his commitment to democracy and to the importance of the multiplicity of views within one party.

One may differ with the director of the party in the way he looks at several matters, but as one listens to him, one feels that he respects the other person's opinion and that he does accept dialogue and discussion. "But when the majority makes a decision, destructive opposition, and especially that which targets the institutions and the future of the republic, becomes impermissible."

This deep-rooted desire for dialogue that he has may be the result of cultural convictions that the director of the party and the minister delegate attached to the prime minister--this is his full official title--derived from his extensive readings and from his tireless fondness for keeping up closely with different cultural and political movements and currents. Is he not a man of letters and a historian? He is in fact one of the most prominent historians, especially in view of the fact that he devoted several volumes and, accordingly, many of his interests to history.

[Question] Your Excellency, you know that the party--any party--has to develop in a developing world. Is it possible to determine the courses along which the Destourian Socialist Party has developed in recent years? Then how do you see this development in the future?

[Answer] You were right when you said that the Destourian Socialist Party, which was previously the Tunisian Destourian Party, is a developing party.

My affirmation of this lies in the fact that the characteristics of the Bourguiba philosophy or the Bourguiba ideology, upon which the party is based, is what is known as an interim policy.

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An interim policy in my view is the biggest indication of our party's adherence to the necessity and the utility of development. This is because the interim policy signifies devotion to a constant goal; it requires that steps be taken towards that goal in accordance with intervals that are consistent with the current capability of our movements and our country. It is a policy which believes that every stage must inevitably make preparations for another. This policy paves the way for the party and for the people in general to make them capable of confronting and overcoming the new stage and then moving from it to another. This is the theoretical aspect of the situation.

There is proven evidence in the history of our party, in the activities it undertakes and in the responsibilities it assumes that it was capable of pushing the wheel of development forward and of keeping in step with this development. Our party is almost one of the few parties in the Third World countries. At any rate, it is the only party in the Arab countries which came into being almost half a century ago. It devoted half of this period to the struggle to liberate Tunisia from French colonialism.

In the second half of its life--almost 23 years--the party proceeded to build a new system after independence and to deal with the basic question of breaking away from backwardness.

The Destourian Socialist Party then was the only party that was able to make independence.

Unlike many previous liberation movements the Destourian Socialist Party was able to go beyond this victory that it achieved and to face up to the new issues that were thrust upon the country.

This is in general.

But if we wanted to talk in detail about the new period of our struggle--that is, the period that followed the struggle for liberation--we have much evidence about the party's ability to push the wheel of progress, to remain in step with this development, and to adjust to it. Let me mention among this evidence in particular the party's ability to embrace new generations.

It is known that ever since its inception and as the days went by the party was able to attract the vast majority of Tunisians to its ranks. But we are the ones who know that ever since independence and until now more than half of the young people [in the country] make up a generation that did not experience the struggle for liberation and did not experience the period of colonialism. This new generation is now in the party and in greater numbers than those of the generations that lived through the struggle for liberation. This indicates the ability of the party to develop by taking in new generations.

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Our party was able to attract these young people only because, first, it was able to renew its interim goals continuously and, [second, because it was able] to make those goals acceptable and conformable in a manner that would create harmony between it and the new generations. The party was able to take in those young people or this new generation only because it was able to renew, in addition to the interim goals, its methods of operation. From among these methods I can mention another indication of the party's ability to renew itself and to develop. This is what we now call --specifically for 5 or 6 years--the contractual policy. In the conference that preceded the last one--the ninth conference--which was convened in 1974, the party was correctly guided to a policy that would enable Tunisian society to achieve the ability to work in a sphere of cooperation and unity and to bring about economic growth and also to become capable of distributing the fruits of this growth in a milieu of mutual understanding and consultation.

This contractual policy which we took from others and derived from the experiences of nations in the area--and I mean specifically the industrialized nations in Western Europe and in North America--makes the social parties, that is, the workers and their representatives; the businessmen and their representatives; and the farmers and their representatives responsible parties. They have their roles in determining the interim goals of the expansion plans--the 5-Year Plan that we are in the process of implementing at the present time.

These social parties are responsible for playing a firm role and for controlling and consolidating the expansion plan. They play an effective role in the distribution of the fruits of growth on a national scale.

I want to make it clear here that everything that has to do with wages, everything that has to do with organization or work inside the economic and the social institutions, as well as everything that has to do with the promotion of workers and with the social security benefits that are prepared for them cannot be carried out without the approval and the participation of the unions. The approval of the unions [is secured] on the basis of a dialogue that takes place between these labor unions, their representatives, businessmen and the state itself. This is because the state is also an employer in Tunisia.

I must also mention to you that two-thirds of the investments that are made in Tunisia are financed by the state. It is known in some circles that Tunisia is a country that pursues a liberal course and places value on individual financing and on the private sector. This is true. We do place value on the private sector by guaranteeing the right to own property and by offering major incentives to the private sector. But in fact, the majority of the financing--no less than two-thirds--is public financing. Because it is the largest employer, the state negotiates with the labor unions and makes agreements with them in everything that pertains to the regulation of wages and labor. This policy is derived from the experiences of advanced nations that our party was able to adapt, to adopt and to work in conformity with.

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I personally find in this an indication that our party is capable of pushing the wheel of development and of keeping in step with this development. This took place only because of the consciousness-raising effort that the party is carrying out in Tunisian society. It is this effort that renders the party capable of taking in the absolute majority of the Tunisian people, and chief among them is the new generation that came after independence. We consider this new generation our broad and our positive foundation. This is what has taken place at the present time.

#### This Is How We See the Future

What we want to achieve in the future is the continuation of this covenant and the reinforcement of this contractual policy. We want to do this by convincing more people in Tunisian circles that this policy is necessary and useful. We know from our experience and from the experience of others that convincing people about the utility of this policy is no easy matter. There are customs and traditions that make it difficult for a capitalist to imagine himself sitting at the same table and negotiating with his employee, arguing that "the employee who accepted the conditions of work in my organization has to work within these conditions. Otherwise, he has to look for another employer." We also know that the worker or the member of a labor union does not accept this policy and cannot easily be made to believe in its necessity and its utility. Because of ideological movements and whims--and these can be found in the human race--the worker is motivated in many instances to consider the employer and the proprietor of a business, even if it were the state, as an enemy and an adversary. This view is derived from alien communist and imported ideologies. They do not apply in any case to our Tunisian society or to our Arab society because our society did not go through the stages that European societies went through. Besides, these communist ideologies failed in Europe itself where, in the sphere of struggle and contention among ideologies, we now find that the workers themselves in Europe are staying away from these ideologies. At the same time, however, we find that such theories continue to have a major influence in the developing countries which did not experience these experiments or which are still going through these experiments. On our part we are aware of these difficulties with workers that cross our path, and we are also aware of the difficulties that we encounter with financiers. As far as the near future is concerned, we are trying to win the wager and to persuade producers, whether they be financiers or workers, that this policy is necessary and useful.

I am firmly convinced that we will win this wager and that we will enable our society to take the road that will enable it to win the wager of development and evolution. [We will enable it to] distribute the resources of the country in a manner that would guarantee every Tunisian his right to a free and honorable life. In the future, this is the activity to which we will devote our efforts.

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This Is How We Understand Pluralism

This policy has another goal also; this goal is what is called pluralism, and our party has a position on it.

This position is not the child of the circumstances and of the moment; it is rather the result of the contact our party has had with western movements. We consider pluralism as being manifested not only in the multiplicity of parties. Our party spent many years of its life coexisting with other parties in Tunisia. The party itself which was established by President Habib Bourguiba was the product of a split that occurred in another party by the same name. Our old party has been in existence for a long time. And there were other communist, socialist and nationalist parties. We lived for a long time with these parties, but for almost 20 years there were no parties to speak of in Tunisia except for Bourguiba's party, that is, the Tunisian Neo-Destourian Liberal Party, which became the Destourian Socialist Party after 1964.

Accordingly, as a result of experiences, our party was able to reach the conviction that pluralism can be achieved without multiple parties.

What is important is to ensure that social interests be defended. The contractual policy that I spoke of is one of the guarantees that must be made available in our society so that pluralism can be achieved. This guarantee is a social guarantee.

Pluralism, then, includes several phenomena. Among the most important of these phenomena is that pluralistic social phenomenon.

What we want from all this is to build a system that provides pluralism without leading society into the pitfalls and the decadence that pluralism led to when it was confined to multiple parties.

This is our concern, if this expression is correct. Our objective is to build a regime that guarantees pluralism and, at the same time, spares society the divisions, the false steps and the relapses that distract society from the battle of growth that we consider our battle.

[Question] Among these given factors, what are the indicators that attracted or caught your attention, especially with regard to the resolutions and the business of the party's recent conference?

[Answer] In my opinion the most important occurrence at the recent conference was the approval of the policy whose features I have been trying to explain. It is a policy that the last conference--the ninth conference--began thinking about. We began working on it in the last 5 years.

This policy was occasionally the subject of violent attacks and challenges. You now understand the events that happened in 1977 and in January 1978.

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These events and these violent campaigns that we were subjected to were to a large extent directed against this policy. The contractual policy, through which we wanted to build our system and our society on a pluralistic basis was the center of these events. We wanted to close the doors to all the dangers that can destroy Tunisia in its entirety. The most important thing in this conference was the fact that we presented this policy again for approval by the highest authority in the party, the National Congress, and the approval was unanimous. Not one voice was heard in opposition to this policy. I consider this a major victory.

#### This Charge Is Rejected

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to respond to a charge that was made against our party. It is being said that we do not accept diversity of opinions or diversity of suggestions within the party. We do not at all refuse dialogue and diversity of opinion within the party. We rather make an effort so that the different questions that are of interest to our country and our people become the subject of debate and dialogue within the party.

The party has never permitted itself to call a person to task because of an opinion he expressed within the party.

The most that the party asks of its members and of everyone who attends its meetings and expresses his opinions--the most that the party asks--after a dialogue is held and a decision is made is that they rally around the decision and that the person in question who gave an opinion that differed from that of the majority not engage in activities that contradict the course that was approved by the majority. I believe that there was an important opportunity at the last conference. Some members of the Central Committee in the party had expressed reservations in 1977 and 1978 about the policy that the party had been trying to implement since its ninth conference in 1974. Those members expressed their opinions and their reservations, but they continued to be members in the Central Committee. The majority did not censure them, that is, the leadership of the party did not take a hostile position towards them such as removing them from this committee. But they were clear in their positions: they did not engage in any activities that contradicted the majority decision; and they attended the recent conference where this policy was presented again. The thing that pleased me very much is the fact that they endorsed this policy, and we were able to win over those who at one time were reticent ministers. They continued to be in the Central Committee, and they are now in full agreement with this policy.

This is my view was the most important matter that was presented to the conference. It is what has been achieved.

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#### Unanimity on the Question of the Succession

What the party is working for is the achievement of accord on the basic problems upon which the system and society are established. Among the achievements that the party is proud of is its success in reaching agreement that is almost universal on some of the social changes and reforms that were introduced to Tunisian society, such as, women's liberation and the reform view that was adopted by the founder of the state and the founder of the party, President Habib Bourguiba. It was this reform view from which President Bourguiba derived many of the social laws that prevail now over our relations inside Tunisian society. All these social reforms have been unanimously approved.

Among the important achievements that we are proud of is this very major agreement on the model of development in the country or what we call Tunisian Constitutional Socialism which is based on the coexistence of the three sectors: the public sector; the sector of guaranteed mutual assistance and cooperation; and the private sector. Except for very few who have odd mentalities, there is no longer anyone who debates or rejects this [notion].

The agreement was completed early in the 1970s, and especially in the last 5 years, on an important matter of our republican system: the relationship between the executive authority and the amendment that took place in the presidential (republican) regime. We had to introduce an amendment to the presidential system by promoting the government as the structure that reports to the National Assembly--the parliament--and also to the head of state and the president of the republic who is elected directly by the people. But the government is also subject to supervision by parliament. Thus some balance between the executive authority and the legislative authority has been achieved.

In this context also there was agreement about a very important matter: the question of succession. When the position of the head of state becomes vacant, how can such a vacancy be filled? This is a very important matter for a country like Tunisia where a republic is being established for the first time throughout our long history. The history of Tunisia is a very long history. Agreement on this question has also been very broad, and it may be said that it was unanimous.

#### We Are Trying To Strengthen the Dialogue

Regarding all these questions it may be said that our party achieved total agreement that was almost unanimous. Such an achievement gives this regime real strength and enables the society to confront the problems of life and the problems of growth in particular with the necessary stability. It mobilizes all the vital energies for the purpose of winning this battle and confronting the challenges of the age. What we will have to do in the future is to strengthen dialogue within the party and reinforce democracy



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[inside the party also]. This too was one of the questions that was raised at the conference, and unanimity was achieved in that regard.

We have always had dialogue. The party has been careful about providing everyone with guarantees so that all members can express their opinions and thoughts without fear or apprehension. What we are now working for is the reinforcement of this dialogue so that we can attain the participation [of all members].

Return to the January Events

[Question] You have touched upon the events of January 1978. Do you believe that such events will not be repeated after today? Have different arrangements or measures been made to prevent the recurrence of such events? How has this been done?

[Answer] I want to respond by focusing on what I said a while ago. Our party is proud of what it achieved. Among its important achievements is the fact that it succeeded in achieving an agreement or a consensus on the basic questions upon which the regime and society are based.

What I want to clarify is that our efforts to achieve this agreement and this consensus have been long and arduous. The consensus of the people, or at least, the majority of the people, on one of the choices does not come about automatically; it comes about from practice and from life experiences by means of setting up a dialogue with life and with events.

The problem is not one of theories. It is not a controversial problem in which elite intellectuals take an interest. No! The problem is one of creating [a sense of] moderation among the ranks of the people. It is a problem of creating a movement that would include the majority of the people who would believe that it would be more useful, more feasible and inevitable that they work together and achieve coexistence among themselves on bases that are well-known and with which they are satisfied. This is how we sought to guarantee this agreement and this consensus.

Ignorance and the Destruction of Organizations

In other words this agreement can only come about through these events. What I want to say briefly is that the events that I have referred to--the 1978 events--were centered around the development model and the model for the society we want to build.

In clearer terms, this is the contractual policy that I have previously referred to. This policy was the subject of give and take and the subject of dispute. There were those who wanted to oppose it, to attribute ignorance to the workers and to mislead public opinion into believing that the contractual policy had not been met with approval and that it had not been acceptable to the workers. Behind this contractual policy and the

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model for development and for society is the existence of Tunisia itself. Tunisian existence itself was the subject of give and take through this kind of conduct. If this were not so, then who permitted some followers to take to the streets, to go to the institutions, to demolish them and to start fires in squares? Therefore, we see in these and in other events which we can talk about at length, throughout our history and throughout this struggle, one of the stages for achieving agreement about the choices on whose bases a system can be built. Such a system would guarantee that Tunisians face a development battle and that harmonious relations be established among them as a modern nation to enable them to build a national state that would provide them with the means of working with dignity and with the necessary guarantees. Such a system would also open the door to development, not to mention the growth that would turn Tunisians into individuals capable of living in this age and coexisting with it.

[Question] What remains concerning all this is the question of democracy. How do you view this problem from which the majority of Third World countries suffer?

[Answer] Democracy has been one of the dreams of the human race ever since the dawn of history. Contemporary societies have been rightly guided, ever since the 18th century, and especially in the 19th century and in this century, to a mode and a model for regulating the practice of this democracy. I personally believe that the mode I referred to--and that is the mode to which European societies and nations that were able to experience, create and live through the industrial revolution were led --is an advanced mode. It is the best mode that the human race has come up with in its long history.

But this mode is now experiencing a crisis, or more correctly, this mode is being questioned for two reasons. The first reason is that there are those who believe that it is possible to apply this mode to Third World Nations that did not take part in the European societies' Industrial Revolution.

It has been observed that whenever there have been attempts to export this system and to put it into practice in Third World countries, difficulties emerged that in many cases led to the statement that this system was unsuitable. We in Tunisia are not saying that the system is not useful or that it is absolutely not useful. We are rather saying that it requires a certain degree of maturity or development that is to be achieved in these societies. The question is a relative one and is dependent upon the objective circumstances that were available in some countries and not available in others. It is this reason that made this system the subject of a question.

There is another reason in my opinion, and that is that the countries in which this system has appeared have gone into and are now going into a new stage of growth and development.

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Another revolution was generated by the Industrial Revolution: this is the technological and electronic revolution which jeopardized the mode or the system that was found and followed ever since the 19th century and clearly at the beginning of this century. That system was no longer quite suitable to the ever-changing, developing reality in these countries themselves, and this matter placed the democratic organization itself, which these countries have been experiencing, in a state of revision where amendments were being sought.

I personally believe and think that Tunisia can be sheltered from this. Tunisia may be more concerned about looking into this subject than some of the other countries because, as a growing country, it belongs to the group of Arab countries, the group of African countries and the group of nations that did not experience the industrial revolution and did not stay abreast of the social, economic and political organizations that resulted from this revolution. Tunisia is concerned about this subject because of the clash that took place with Europe in the form of colonialism; because of Tunisia's proximity to Europe; because of what was achieved in this regard in Tunisia during the colonial period; because of the social and economic changes that followed independence; and because of the rapid growth we are seeing now. What we are insisting upon is that there be a search for a solution to the subject of democracy and that this solution be suitable to our conditions and our characteristics. Among our characteristics is the fact that there is a party like ours. It is not a conventional party in the sense that it acquired [its system] from the political parties that created this outstanding democratic system in Europe. But it does have other characteristics that are consistent with Tunisia's situation as a country that, like the Arab countries, the Islamic countries and the countries of the Third World, has experienced a long period of pressures.

Tunisia is a country that has suffered from the colonialism that controlled and impoverished it. The spontaneous resistance [mechanisms] in this country have at times been denied. The party adopted a method and procedures of operation and organization that distinguish it from other parties. We are proceeding on a course that would enable us to build a mode of democracy that is suitable to the aspirations our people and our youth have at the present time.

What About Parliamentary Elections?

[Question] The country is attributing much importance to the parliamentary elections that will be held next month. In your view what new [conditions] will result from this experiment on the scene of democratic practice?

[Answer] These are not the first legislative elections in Tunisia. Ever since the dawn of independence in 1956, the first action that was undertaken by the party was that of organizing the elections for the Constituent Assembly that it reverted to and whose principal role was to enact the

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constitution of the country. This happened after independence was achieved according to the plan and the method that were pursued in the process of the struggle [for independence]. Our constitution then is written by experts and it was put to a referendum. The matter was charged to representatives who were elected directly by the people. They were charged with the matter of enacting this constitution that proclaimed the republic and organized the government as it is organized now in Tunisia.

Ever since that time we have had legislative elections every 5 years. What is important in our opinion is that we continue as a people, as a nation and as a state to hold these elections regularly. What we pledge as a party is that when it is time for these elections, we will not postpone our encounter with the electorate and with the people by influencing events or by doing something or another. This is what we pledge to the people. It is an important date in our opinion at this level. But what makes this date more valuable is the fact that we, and, specifically, President Bourguiba, took the initiative. In the past few months President Bourguiba took the initiative of introducing improvements to the Elections Code. In accordance with these improvements the party promises to submit lists [of candidates] in every electoral district. A list will contain [the names of] candidates whose numbers will be twice that of the seats that the candidates are competing for. If the number of seats in an electoral district were five, the party will nominate 10 of its members. Male and female Tunisian voters who are over 20 years old will have the freedom to choose five of the 10 candidates.

This is a new initiative that we undertook to strengthen the participation [of party members]. (I spoke previously on the occasion of the conference about the importance of strengthening participation; we are trying and we will try in the future to strengthen the participation of party members in party life and in the practice of responsibility.) As far as our relations with the people are concerned, we want to have more participation from male and female citizens not only in controlling trends and choices, but also in selecting their representatives and their deputies who will work on their behalf and in their stead to carry out these choices and to monitor the government that gives these choices concrete form and derives from them programs for regulating the affairs of the country.

Yes, it is a new step on the road to participation. The party considers itself responsible for the success of this step; it is depending on its fighters and its broad base with regard to guaranteeing success for this new experiment.

Masmoudi and Our Neighbor Al-Qadhafi

[Question] Let us go back to the question of democracy inside the party. What are the guarantees that can be given to the minority in the party? How does the minority express itself?

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[Answer] As far as the law is concerned, there are guarantees in our bylaws; and as far as practice is concerned, there are guarantees in the provisions [of the law].

Except for the electoral meetings, most of the meetings of the party are open meetings. They are open to all citizens. The party never reproached a person for an opinion he presented at these meetings. If someone were reproached in accordance with party law stipulations, that person was reproached for expressing an opinion and then carrying out activities that were inconsistent with a decision that had been adopted by a majority.

[Question] Does this mean that a citizen who opposes a decision can express his opinion in newspapers and in party bulletins?

[Answer] If no specific resolution has been taken regarding an opinion that is being discussed, opposition is permissible. We often try by means of the party's press to raise some issues and to ask party members to express their opinions on them. In fact, we encourage difference of opinion, but there are basic rules that must be adhered to. The problems always exist concerning the basic questions. The party conference that preceded the last one, for example, adopted a resolution to turn down [the membership] of Mohamed Masmoudi because the question was not that of an opinion, but it was rather the problem and the question of the existence of Tunisia. Tunisia is either in existence or it isn't. The man did not confine himself to expressing his views in a clean fashion, but he resorted instead to the well-known actions with our friend and our neighbor Mu'ammal-Qadhdhafi. The question of the [Continental] shelf that he proposed for discussion was presented to the party, and the leadership of the party took the position that it adopted by a majority, even if that majority were by one vote. During the meeting that took place on 15 January 1974 Masmoudi himself did endorse the statement that was issued.

But after such conduct he left Tunisia and went to Libya. He stayed there, throwing himself in the embrace of foreigners. No modern nation in a responsible state can accept such conduct from any person. We want to achieve a Tunisian accord; opinions may vary within and outside the party.

Opposition and the Required Dialogue

[Question] Let us also return to the problem of democracy. Are citizens allowed to publish newspapers without belonging to a party?

[Answer] There is no doubt about this, and this is according to law. The number of newspapers that are published by people who are not members of the Destourian Party outnumbers that of the newspapers that are published by the party.

[Question] Pluralism within the party signifies that opportunities must be opened to everybody on the basis of the fact that there is no comprehensive

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theory, but rather a program. There must be a commitment to the program and not to theories. Can party members subscribe to different ideologies? To what extent can there be in the party rightist and leftist members or those who believe in the traditional capitalist theory, in the Marxist theory or in the Islamic theory?

[Answer] A person who joins the party is asked not to join another party and to make a commitment that he not do so. But what distinguishes us [from others], and what we are careful of is that the principles which we call experimental, that is, those that are the subject of discussion and experience are found on a broad scale. This is notwithstanding the fact that the most important principles of the party are, first, the commitment to work for Tunisia; [the commitment] to place the interests of the homeland above every other consideration; and [the commitment] to adhere to ethical values and to the slogan that was proposed by President Bourguiba, "True statements and sincere efforts."

[Question] It is evident according to the realistic map, and your excellency has clarified this point, that there are opposition forces, regardless of their size, inside the country and abroad. Does the party actually invite these forces to engage in a dialogue to achieve what we call the historical accord for Tunisia? What are the measures that have been taken in this area on the part of the party because it is the party in power?

[Answer] What we have been advocating continuously is the effort to have faith in the usefulness of dialogue. We do take advantage of opportunities to shed light on the bases upon which this dialogue may be moved forward since it is not possible for me to engage in a dialogue with a person who does not believe in the system. I want to call your attention to the recent speech with which President Bourguiba inaugurated the recent conference. He presented in that speech the bases that could bind the Destourians within the party together and also the bases that could bind together the Tunisians inside the country in general. To establish this dialogue with others, all that we want is that they have faith in Tunisia, in its independence and in its sovereignty and that they not deal with foreign countries so that foreign intervention can be avoided. What is also being requested of them is that they respect the constitution of the country. In responding to a previous question about parliamentary elections, I mentioned that the party will promise to submit lists that will have twice the number of candidates as seats that are to be filled. But the door is also open to lists other than those which the party will offer. This is always possible. On numerous occasions persons who were not affiliated with the party nominated themselves. Unfortunately, they were not elected because the majority was always supporting the [candidates in the] lists that were submitted by the party.

The last time [this happened] was in 1978 when partial elections were held to elect one representative to the National Assembly. At that time the party presented its candidates. A young professor had nominated himself

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as an independent, and he conducted his election campaign. He did not get enough votes to be elected, but the votes that he did get should have encouraged him because he got 5 percent of the vote.

There Are No Political Prisoners in Tunisia

[Question] Are there political prisoners and detainees in Tunisia? [If there are], how many of them are there precisely?

[Answer] There are detainees, but we do not consider them political. This is because they were not taken to court because of their political beliefs, but rather because of concrete actions [they committed]. At any rate there are not many of them.

[Question] Newspaper news states that the number of detainees is in the hundreds.

[Answer] This is slander. The fact is that there are only 12 or 13 detainees in prison of those who had participated in the events of January. The supreme fighter pardoned [all the rest] with regard to [the case of] Habib Achour. There is another group--about 15 or 20--from organizations which claim to be Marxist, Leninist and revolutionary, etc. Those people were tried in recent years by ordinary courts, and only 20 persons remain in jail after the rest were included in the presidential pardon.

Habib Achour and Others

[Question] Will the case of those people be considered?

[Answer] It is known that President Bourguiba takes advantage of all opportunities to pardon prisoners whether they are prisoners of the public right, who committed civil crimes, or prisoners who were put on trial because they engaged in activities they claimed defended specific ideological or political actions. None of those served the determined sentence. Habib Achour, for example, was sentenced by the court to 10 years, but he spent only about 10 months [in jail].

The Army Is Removed from the Political Scene

[Question] What is the role of the army's posture on the political and social map in Tunisia?

[Answer] In the organization we selected for the state, the army cannot play a political role at all. Its function is confined to defending the inviolability of the homeland.

In the law of the state, the government must be civilian and it should emanate from popular elections that take place in the manner stipulated by the constitution of the country. The president of the nation is

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directly elected by the people, and the National Assembly is also elected directly by the people. The military authority cannot at all have a role in politics because political affairs fall within the jurisdiction of the elected authorities.

[Question] But has the army made attempts to play a political role?

[Answer] There were attempts in 1962 to overthrow the regime, and a number of army officers had participated in this attempt. This attempt failed, and it was one of the hardships that afflicted the country. We are taking advantage of these misfortunes so that the majority of Tunisians would learn a lesson from them.

Tunisia, the Arab League and Unity

[Question] Tunisia has become the home of the Arab League. This did not happen by chance, but rather the Arab countries agreed to it unanimously. Consequently, Tunisia is now responsible for part of the burdens of the Arab course. What specifically is that role in your opinion?

[Answer] With regard to Tunisia, allow me to say before anything else that Tunisia never sought to become the seat of the Arab League. It undertook no initiative and no action that would make it a candidate for this position. It was rather, like all the Arab countries, considering the seat of the league to be in the location where it was embraced and formed, that is, in Egypt. Moving the offices of the league was the result of events that do not concern us here and in which we did not participate. It was the result of one of the misfortunes with which nations are afflicted. As Arabs we are concerned about such misfortunes. When we saw that there was unanimity or semi-unanimity about moving the seat of the league as an expression of the Arab countries' dissatisfaction with the Camp David Accords, we saw that it was our duty to respond to this resolution. We saw in it a tribute that the East was paying to the Arab Maghreb; it is an expression that we cherish and truly appreciate.

It is my wish to construe this consensus that was achieved in the selection of Tunisia as the seat for the league during this period as the result of Tunisia's conduct with the Arab brothers since independence and even before independence. This conduct has always been [the result of] the effort made by Tunisia and by its political and ideological leaders.

Among all the things that we are concerned about is that we be in agreement with our Arab brothers in the effort for unity. Tunisia has never taken a hostile position or one that rejects unity, but it was always stating that unity must be viewed as a goal because it is a remote goal that we must strive to attain. Yes, we cannot view unity as though it were a vital and a tangible reality. It is a goal and not a premise. In this regard we have already found ourselves in some situations to be at variance with some Arab countries who were proposing unity as though it did exist, whereas we

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thought that unity was a goal that no one could turn down, but that no one also could consider an existing fact,

At the present time the vast majority of Arabs believe in our notion of unity. In its relations with its Arab sisters and even in the sharpest differences it had with some of its Arab brothers, Tunisia did not consider this dispute to be substantive. It never resorted to a total estrangement from the Arab countries. It did not allow itself throughout these critical periods to carry out any hostile action against the Arab countries that were not in agreement with it. It did not allow itself to influence the substance of relations it had with the Arab countries, add it tried to have the dispute seen as a political dispute. It tried, as General De Gaulle said, "not to insult the future." President Bourguiba has always tried to prepare for the future and to take this future into account even when the severest crises and disputes took place. He tried to confine such disputes to a political framework and to the framework of the question that was being disputed, and he tried to maintain other relations and other communications in all the fields.

We want this tribute to Tunisia of transferring the league to it to be seen as a reward for this style that Tunisia pursued in its relations with countries of the Arab East. We hope Tunisia will not disappoint the Arab countries that set great hopes on it.

We and the Neighbors

[Question] What is the standard and the nature of relations and disputes with Tunisia's neighbors?

[Answer] We are careful about having good relations with different countries and especially with the neighboring countries.

We can say that there is nothing to tarnish our relations with our direct neighbors like Algeria and Libya except the very simple matter that pertains to our relations with Libya. We explain this matter on its theoretical and political level, that is, in the outlook towards unity and in the road to it.

We do not refuse unity as a goal; we rather consider ourselves enlisted in its service.

We are saying, however, that unity cannot be achieved at once. It may be achieved in the remote future provided that we work now in a framework of sincerity and solidarity to achieve cooperation that is diligent and useful in all fields. What we are comfortable about now is the fact that this cooperation does exist. The dispute about this political theory and problem did not prevent the existence of relations. We think that these relations could have been better, and [we think] this cooperation could have been greater and more beneficial. What we find to be positive is the fact that good, neighborly relations do exist.

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President Bourguiba Is the Principal Reason

[Question] What is your explanation for the phenomenon of the stability of the Tunisian experiment in spite of the hostility that it faced?

[Answer] You asked about the reason, and I reply that the principal reason is the man who brought this movement to life and who founded it, President Habib Bourguiba. But what is important about this man is that he was able to continue; he was able to survive; and he was able to last. This was attentiveness [on his part]. He used to advise party members during the days of the struggle for liberation by saying, "Continue the struggle as long as you can." He used to make this recommendation, and he himself applied it by persevering in the struggle, in the action and in the effort.

There is another reason, and that is that the president is a thinking man and that he refused to tie his thoughts to abstract choices, but that he tied them instead to the reality of the country and to the life and events that the country was experiencing in his administration. In other words he tied his thoughts to the age and to its consciousness. Among the commitments he made was that by which he would never permit himself to be out of touch with the people even though his people may find flaws in his positions and inclinations because he is an intellectual with an idea and a mission. Yes, he never allowed himself to be out of touch with this nation. He tried to form a strong relationship with the people, and he tried to strengthen this relationship and to walk with the people to achieve the goals.

I am repeating that the reason that made this regime withstand [adversity] and survive [hardship] was the conduct of this man and the course he selected and pursued.

As a result of this Bourguiba provided another reason [for the survival of the regime]. The vast majority of the people rallied around this man and around the course that he taught them not as theory, but rather in practical life along with the events, the disturbances, and the misfortunes. Bourguiba tried to experience all the misfortunes with the people, and he tried to make the people draw lessons from every misfortune. Bourguiba did not confine his thinking to the Tunisian people only; his thoughts comprised the problems of the age.

My research into the life, the works and the thoughts of this man leads me to believe that he benefited a great deal from the period during which he lived in the East. He spent almost 5 years in Egypt, and he moved to different countries of the East and even to Palestine before the occupation. He drew many lessons and morals from the events that he experienced in the East during this period in the forties.

To complete the discussion about the army, [I will mention] one of the events that Bourguiba pondered at length and from which he derived a lesson. We must refer to the first military coup in Syria that was organized

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by Husni al-Za'im. What President Bourguiba saw in this period while he was living in the East was one of the reasons that moved him to return to Tunisia and to alter the plan of action. The plan of action during that period was that he remain in the East and rely on his comrades to take action. He would direct them and be their advocate, having spent more than 10 years in French prisons. Bourguiba thought that action could be taken in this manner, that is, by finding support in the East to reinforce the struggle inside Tunisia. But when Husni al-Za'im's coup took place and he derived from that coup the lessons that he did, Bourguiba himself made the decision to return to Tunisia and to alter the plan of action. He directed the struggle in another way--the way that he pursued and that led to negotiations with France and to the attainment of internal independence, then full independence and what we have now. Bourguiba said this after the coup: "A door has now been opened in the East that will be difficult to close." This is what made us choose a civilian government and an army that was to have no role except that of defending the borders of the homeland. The army was to have no other role in domestic political life.

Camp David and the Adulterated Solution

[Question] Let us move on to the second part of this discussion which deals with Tunisia's position on Camp David. Some people expected Tunisia to assume a position that was less hostile to Camp David; but then we saw Tunisia take a clear and an open position based on a theory about "the adulterated solution and the inadequate solution." Is there further explanation for this position?

[Answer] I mentioned to you in our previous conversation what the supreme fighter said in explaining the progression that he was always calling for. He considered it to be the necessary and the modern course of political action. Progression requires a person to seek the goal [to which he aspires]. Bourguiba said that not all the steps were acceptable. He said that we would accept a step that made preparations for another and that brought us closer and as fast as possible to the goal. He said that we would not accept the steps that were portrayed as steps but did in fact close the doors to development and did not make preparations for steps that would bring us closer to the goal.

As a result of this President Bourguiba did accept inadequate solutions during his struggle to liberate Tunisia. These solutions did not respond to the demands of the National Movement and did not respond to all the nationalistic demands. Bourguiba, however, never accepted an adulterated solution. There is some difference between an inadequate solution and an adulterated solution.

On the basis of this mental attitude we took this position on Camp David. Some people mistakenly expected Tunisia to support the Camp David Accords.

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This was a mistake because whoever expected that did not know the difference [between an inadequate solution and an adulterated solution]. With regard to Camp David, it became evident to the president of the state, to the government and to the policy of the entire state after much scrutiny and thought in the light of the resolutions that we examined that these accords could not be considered a step that would bring us closer to the goal we are hoping for. We cannot accept the method by which these accords were established, nor can we accept the exclusion of those who are concerned about the matter--the Palestinians and Syria, which as a state is also concerned with these accords or with their general framework. We cannot accept these accords because we know that a solution that would guarantee peace cannot be reached if those concerned do not take part in the accords that concern them. The fact that Syria and the PLO did not participate is one of the most important reasons that made us assume this position on Camp David also.

In addition, we do not consider these accords capable of ensuring Arab rights. This is based on our examination of these accords. They are in fact incapable of bringing the Palestinian people closer to their legitimate goal of achieving a sovereign, independent state. We view the Palestinian people as having a legitimate and a natural right to determine their own destiny and to have their own state. A nation that has no state does not exist.

Therefore, denying a nation its independence and its sovereignty is a crime. This is a natural right, and it is a right that is recognized by international law.

Tunisia, therefore, will continue to view this question from this perspective. Presenting a solution that implies recognition of this right and makes preparations for it is a positive action in our view. But Tunisia also requires something else, and that is, that those concerned--that is, the Palestinians, the liberation organization which represents them and which is accepted as the representative of the Palestinians by all the Arab countries and by the United Nations--accept this solution. This is the stipulation that we make to accept this solution.

[Question] There is some talk in the Arab world, especially after Camp David, about the need for looking for basic grounds upon which the Arab countries can stand to form a common national Arab strategy that would take into consideration confronting Zionism and confronting backwardness with a collective effort in which all human energies and all the oil and financial [resources] would be utilized, not to mention the exchange of experiences and expertise after a 25-year stage of disputes. What is Tunisia's position on this question?

[Answer] What I can say to define what this strategy should be and how the efforts of the Tunisian people should be channeled in the context of

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this goal [is this]: Zionism, imperialism or Camp David is not the impetus for the efforts we are making to attain this strategic goal or to establish this strategy. Imperialism or Zionism and their subordinates are assuming this position as a result of the weakness that has been our heritage for long centuries.

Bourguiba has already denounced Zionism and advocated that the Jews must be liberated from the Zionist attitude just as the Germans were liberated from the Nazi attitude. He made this statement in a speech he delivered in 1946 in Cairo to the Anglo-American Committee that was charged at that time with investigating the Middle East question and the Palestinian question, this was before the well-known 1947 UN Resolution. At that time Bourguiba was a refugee in Cairo and the leader of our party.

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