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Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 49/79)

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

GEORGE HABASH DISCUSSES DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, LEBANESE SITUATION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 1-7 Nov 79 pp 29-33

[Interview With Dr George Habash, PFLP Chairman and Palestinian Rejectionist Front Leader, by Badr-al-Din al-Hajj; "Do We Proceed With Our Political Activity on Basis of Settlement Course or Liberation Course; Has Our Goal Become One of Setting Up a Palestinian Entity in Bank and Strip; Why Don't We Present Our Issue as It Is From Its Roots; Why Don't We, as Revolution and as Liberation Organization, Rely on International Resolutions; Can We Fight Zionist in Isolation From Israel; It Is Serious Matter That Palestinian People Be Given Some of Their Rights in Return for Recognizing Israel; We Want to Strengthen Our Relations With Fatah and We Are Ready to Return to Executive Committee; We Call for Postponing Ideological Conflicts and We Are not Against Any Religious Current; It Is Time for Official Authority to Realize That Palestinian Revolution Is a Reality Present in Lebanon"]

[Text] Beirut--Lebanese and Palestinians call George Habash al-Hakim [hakim means both physician and sage]. A hakim in Lebanon is a physician and George Habash is actually a physician. He is also a wise and judicious man who has gained experience in political action and in armed struggle action since he founded the Arab National Movement in the early 1950's and devoted all his time and efforts for the struggle for his small homeland, Palestine.

It was natural for AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI to go to Dr George Habash to ask him for his opinion on the turning point on which the Palestinian revolution is now embarking. His opinion has special significance which is due, first to his historical status in the national Arab and Palestinian struggle, and second, due to the fact that Dr Habash embodies a current in the Palestinian revolution that gives the rifle top priority in the popular liberation war.

In front of the "phusician's" headquarters, the guard was heavy and the Popular Front's youths with their covered faces were heavily armed.

Inside the building, we are welcomed by Abu-'Ali Mustafa, Dr George Habash's deputy. We then enter a modest office where we were received by Dr Habash with his usual smile.

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On the wall there are two pictures. The first is that of Khalid Abu-'A'ishah, martyr of the Revenge Movement, which was formed by the Nationalists Movement, who fell in the occupied territories in 1964. The second picture is that of Abu-Amal, the Popular Front's military commander in the Palestinian camp of Tall al-Za'tar who resisted the blockade of the Marunite National Front forces for a long time.

I Support Movement in United Nations

[Question] You have described the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] approval of presenting the Palestinian issue to the United Nations as "a new flexible policy" followed by the front for the first time. At present, Palestinian diplomacy is active at the European and American levels. How do you determine your position in the front toward the diplomatic Palestinian activity, especially toward the efforts seeking to establish a U.S.-Palestinian dialogue?

[Answer] The diplomatic efforts generally exerted by the PLO leadership at present cover more than one sphere. There are diplomatic efforts taking place at the level of the friends, i.e., within the friendly camp--such as the Havana nonaligned states conference and the forthcoming Lisbon conference. Diplomatic efforts are being also exerted at the level of the United Nations. Other efforts are being made at the level of Europe and, recently the United States.

In fact, we in the Popular Front distinguish between the diplomatic efforts made in this or that sphere. We support enthusiastically the diplomatic efforts made at the level of the friendly camp because, as demonstrated by the revolution's experience, we can come up with resolutions that condemn the Zionist Movement as a racist movement, that denounce the Camp David accords and the second peace treaty between the Egyptian regime and Israel and that generally support the Palestinian people's national rights. This is why we feel that these efforts and the resolutions that they produce support us in our struggle.

[Question] What about the diplomatic efforts within the United Nations?

[Answer] Insofar as the United Nations is concerned and in light of the change that has taken place in the organization's structure since its formation, we have begun to feel that the balance of powers within the United Nations, especially within the General Assembly, has begun to tip in favor of the interest of the progressive forces and of the national liberation movements. An example is resolution 3226 which supports the Palestinian people's rights without linking them to the Zionist entity and the condition of recognizing the Zionist entity. There is no doubt that if we manage to obtain from the U.N. organizations this kind of resolutions that support our rights without linking them to the legitimacy of the Zionist presence, then we consider this a gain.

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We Are Against Contacts With Europe and United States

[Question] How about the contacts with Europe and the United States?

[Answer] We condemn strongly all the diplomatic efforts being made in this phase with the United States in particular or with Europe. The Palestinian and Arab balance of powers and the Palestinian revolution's intrinsic factor have not yet reached the limit that enables us to deal with the enemy camp (the United States and Europe) diplomatically in the manner that the Vietnamese revolution did.

The Vietnamese revolution started its negotiations with the U.S. enemy under the canopy of a very advanced phase of revolutionary growth and when it was confident that it would wrench its rights from the hostile camp's talons. As for the Palestinian revolution, it hasn't yet attained this level. This is why we believe that the diplomatic efforts with the enemy camp, meaning the imperialist camp of the United States and Europe, are efforts engulfed by pitfalls.

In this particular phase, we believe that the Palestinian revolution's position should be that of boycotting the U.S. imperialism and that the revolution should be the voice urging all the Arab regimes to boycott the United States diplomatically, politically, economically, militarily and at all levels.

When the bilateral agreement was concluded between the Egyptian regime and the Zionist enemy, a loud voice was raised demanding that the efforts be turned against the snake's head instead of being content with taking aim at al-Sadat's regime. The slogan of boycotting the U.S. imperialism at all levels was also raised. It is our evaluation that this slogan was supposed to have persisted. For the PLO leadership to seek at this stage to establish relations with the United States is a wrong position that hinders the process of separating the camp of the friends from the camp of the enemies--a process that should take place at this time.

[Question] But isn't there a difference between the U.S. position and the European position?

[Answer] There is no doubt that there is some sort of a conflict between the United States and Europe. A scientific thinking must take this conflict into account. But what are the dimensions of this conflict?

In our evaluation, Europe is presently attempting to be the link between Camp David and future settlement plans that might be partly different from the Camp David [accords], but not essentially different.

This is why we can sum up our stance as a Popular Front toward this entire wave of diplomatic efforts being exerted by the PLO as a stance of total opposition to all these efforts at the European and U.S. levels and a stance of full and strong support for the efforts within the framework of the United Nations.

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We Are Not Against Diplomatic Efforts But...

[Question] So you are against every diplomatic effort? What I mean is that you are against politicizing the Palestinian rifle?

[Answer] There is the Popular Front's private view of linking the diplomatic activity to the revolutionary action in its entirety, We must also clarify and explain our goal behind the diplomatic activity.

We in the Popular Front are not against diplomatic efforts. But we believe that the more urgent tasks facing the Palestinian revolution leadership are presently the tasks of bringing about some kind of Palestinian national unity, mobilizing the Palestinian masses seriously, enhancing our military forces and capabilities and escalating the political and military struggle of our masses in the occupied Palestine.

The efforts must be focused here primarily and any diplomatic efforts by the PLO must be fully linked to these efforts.

The second, and fundamental, point is that these gains that can be made at the level of the world public opinion and the level of the U.N. organizations should not at all demand as their price the PLO's slipping anew into the settlement course and path.

We in the Popular Front agree, and this is nothing new, with the idea that says the full liberation of the Palestinian soil cannot take place in one thrust and that it is natural for our goals of full liberation to pass through phases. We also agree that in each of these phases it is necessary to determine a phased goal. But it is also essential that this phased goal actually form a phased goal on the path of the strategic goal, i.e., a phased step toward liberation.

This is the basic difference that distinguishes us from others. To achieve some Palestinian gains at the expense of recognizing the Zionist entity's legitimacy is no gain at all. To achieve some gains without acknowledging the Zionist entity's legitimacy is, in our evaluation, something sound and scientific. It is natural that the Palestinian revolution should proceed toward achieving its goals with this graduality.

Settlement Course and Liberation Course

[Question] Does not your interpretation of diplomatic action shackle the political movement of the Palestinian struggle?

[Answer] The central point is: Should we proceed in our dealings within this sphere of diplomatic efforts on the basis of the settlement course or the liberation course?

We believe that the settlement course is a dangerous course. What is meant here by the settlement course is to have the Palestinian people given some of their rights in return for the price of acknowledging the Zionist entity's

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legitimacy. The price of these given rights also means the creation of the Palestinian state in a manner that makes it allied with the U.S. imperialism.

This, in fact, is the danger of this course. We are aware of the dangers of this course at all the Palestinian, Arab and international levels.

At the Palestinian level, there is real and legitimate concern in the circles of the Palestinian masses. This concern is accompanied by the following big question: Have all the Palestinian revolution's goals come to be summed up in the creation of a Palestinian entity or a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the [Gaza] Strip at the expense of our legitimate historical right to liberate the Palestinian soil in its entirety?

We in the Popular Front are aware of such concern among the masses. Whenever the masses hear of the triumphs of the Palestinian diplomacy, they cannot free themselves of linking these triumphs to the question: Are we paying the price of these triumphs in the direction of entrenching the Zionist entity's legitimacy?

At the Arab level, the settlement course has caused numerous Arab regimes to present Israel as if it were an extant reality.

What, for example, has al-Sadat done?

Al-Sadat used the settlement course as a cover to slip into the path along which he has proceeded. In other words, it is as if these regimes say: As long as the PLO leadership seems to be tacitly willing to recognize Israel's presence if it can make some gains, then why don't you allow me, as an Egyptian regime or a Jordanian regime, to realize some gains, even if at the expense of recognizing the Zionist entity's legitimacy?

[Question] Yes, but there are those who say that the Palestinian cause has gained a lot from its movement at the international level?

[Answer] Even at an international level, the settlement course that no longer pays attention to the need to link the phased goal with the strategic goal has led to the following result:

The Palestinian issue is no longer projected at the international level on the basis of the presence of this fascist, Nazi, Zionist entity and the need to uproot this presence and on the basis that there can be no peace in the area with the presence of a fascist, racist state. This is no longer in the picture. It is as if Israel's existence has become an acknowledged reality.

At the international level, it is as if the question has become: What can we offer the Palestinian people with the continued presence of Israel and the Zionist entity? This is why what determines our position toward the diplomatic efforts is the following question:

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Do we proceed with these efforts on the basis of the settlement course or the liberation course?

We in the PFLP do not oppose any form of the diplomatic efforts if it proceeds clearly on the basis of the course of liberation and not the settlement course. This clarity must not exist in the minds of the leaderships alone but must be projected among the Palestinian and Arab masses and among the progressive world public opinion.

Moreover, why don't we present our issue as it is from its roots? Isn't it a just issue?

Here, I would like to refer to the international resolutions condemning Zionism. We consider these resolutions among the best resolutions we have been able to get in the Palestinian arena. There is the U.N. resolution condemning Zionism and the recent nonalignment conference resolution also condemning Zionism. Why don't we, as a Palestinian revolution and as a liberation organization rely on such resolutions to ask all the states and all the forces that condemn Israel: Is there a distinction between Zionism and the State of Israel? Isn't the State of Israel the tangible embodiment of the racist Zionist concept? Can any force condemning Zionism and wanting to fight it actually do so without fighting Israel?

Our issue is obviously just. It is my estimate that when the Palestinian revolution continues to project its scientific understanding of the Zionist presence on the Palestinian and Arab soil and when the Palestinian revolution defines its objective position toward all these formulas, then this projection and this definition will lead to abandoning the Camp David course and to proceeding along a course bearing the sign: Real liberation of the Arab and of the Palestinian soil.

This is why the weight should be shifted toward putting the progressive parties, organizations and forces face to face with their responsibilities in mobilizing the Arab masses, in forcefully compelling the regimes to carry out their duties or in forming the forces of change capable of toppling these regimes and replacing them by others capable of performing the national and pan-Arab tasks existing on the Palestinian and Arab arena at present.

We Seek to Return to Executive Committee

[Question] A question concerning Palestinian unity: Why doesn't the Popular Front return to the framework of the PLO's Executive Committee?

[Answer] First, the Popular Front is fully prepared to return to the framework of the PLO's Executive Committee. We were supposed to be within the Executive Committee now had the latest session of the Palestinian National Council succeeded in implementing and crystallizing the organizational program that had been approved theoretically.

Second, we are still enthusiastic for achieving the highest possible level of national unity now. The practical translation of this level is our presence within the framework of the Executive Committee.

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[Question] You say that the Popular Front is prepared to return to the framework of the Executive Committee. Doesn't this mean a change in your previous position of withdrawing from the committee?

[Answer] This change in our position as a Popular Front is due to two reasons. What I mean by the change is the change from the front's voluntary position of withdrawing from the committee to its present position which is reflected in its wish to return to the Executive Committee.

The first reason is that the settlement course concerning the Palestinian issue is presently blocked, even though there are Palestinian forces that want to deal with the settlement issue. This is a very important reason.

The climate of 1974, 1975 and 1976 was different from the present climate. At that time there was a real danger of the projection of a settlement formula different from the Camp David formula and under which the PLO leadership could have become a party in the settlement process.

The formula of the Camp David accords has put the PLO outside the framework of the settlement. Therefore, despite our disagreements with the settlement course, there is no settlement projected for practical implementation on the Palestinian arena.

The second reason is the Camp David accords and the ferocious imperialist onslaught that seeks to totally annihilate the Palestinian revolution.

Therefore, we believe that we are on the threshold of a new phase insofar as the issue of the Palestinian relations is concerned, whether in terms of our readiness to enter the Executive Committee or in terms of our wish to bolster our relations with all the Palestinian organizations and, also, our warm desire to bolster our relations with our brothers in Fatah.

Despite any differences, there are two acute battles facing the Palestinian masses at present: The first is the plot of self-rule in the occupied Palestine and the second is the battle to annihilate the Palestinian rifle in Lebanon.

I repeat that despite any differences, we are fully prepared to put our hands in the hands of our brothers in all of the Palestinian revolution's factions to foil the self-rule plot first and to protect the Palestinian rifle on the Lebanese soil second.

[Question] Do you have any conditions for returning to the framework of the Executive Committee?

[Answer] I would like to point out that we do not bear the responsibility for our presence outside the framework of the Executive Committee until this moment. We are now struggling in a positive, democratic and comradely climate so that the Palestinian National Council may hold another session as soon as possible--a session that can result in the election of a new

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Executive Committee that is more in harmony with the organizational program that was approved in the 14th session and that includes the Popular Front in its fold.

Yes There Is Decline and Bright Spots

[Question] Dr, can't it be acknowledged that there is a decline in the so-called Arab national liberation movement generally?

[Answer] Of course. There is agreement on this question. However, it is necessary to underline the presence of truly bright spots in the Arab area despite the state of decline.

Take for example the ceaseless and escalating political and military struggle of our heroic Palestinian people in the occupied homeland and their steadfastness despite this state of decline.

What about the magnificent and constant position taken daily by our people in the occupied homeland since al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and until this moment?

I say this so that we may see the struggle capabilities with which our masses are rich. There are other bright spots here in Lebanon, whether in the form of the Lebanese National Movement or of the Palestinian revolution. Moreover, there have been persistent and active plans throughout the past 5 years to annihilate the Lebanese and Palestinian rifle.

Is the continued presence of the Palestinian revolution and of the Lebanese National Movement until this moment and despite all these plans and their weight a mere coincidence?

The answer is no. Coincidence may help us to avoid one blow. But to have survived all this time despite all these plans means that there are revolutionary capabilities rallied behind a just cause that will find its way, regardless of how dark is the picture at present, toward creating a real change in the balance of powers.

If we examine the Arab area in its entirety, we find that in the middle of the state of the reactionary-imperialist tide there are seeds for a real revolutionary revival, even in the Egyptian arena itself. I wanted to underline this point so that our masses may see what may be called the reply that will be inevitably generated by this wave of the imperialist-reactionary tide.

[Question] What is your interpretation--you who have lived with this tidal movement--of the new phenomenon, namely the phenomenon of the growth of the sectarian or denominational spirit?

[Answer] Imperialism uses all weapons to achieve its goals. One of the weapons is that of inciting sectarian jingoism. Imperialism also uses the

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weapon of military threats, as is happening at present in the Gulf area, and is singing the tune of preparing military forces to intervene at the right moment to prevent any change in the Gulf.

Imperialism does not only resort to military threats but also embarks on military action against the revolutionary forces. At this moment, Israel's attacks against southern Lebanon constitute one of the means of imperialism to achieve its goals. Imperialism also resorts to diplomatic maneuvers to foil the Arab revolutionary movements in the area.

Imperialism thinks of all weapons without exception. One of these weapons is to incite sectarian jingoism. The most obvious example of this is what is happening in Syria at present. How can we explain this issue?

In 1976, there was a clash between the Syrian regime and the resistance. Where were these forces that are now trying to pretend to be struggling against the shortcomings of the Syrian regime?

When these acts appear in this historic moment on the Syrian arena, we cannot but link them to the imperialist plans. The reason is that Syria is presently opposed to the Camp David accords, regardless of any argument that can be made as to the fundamentality of this position and as to the mobilizational method of confronting the Camp David accords.

Regardless of any argument, Syria is currently opposed to Camp David. Moreover, its geographic location makes it a central link in uniting the Arab opposition to Camp David.

This is why the imperialist plans seek to submerge Syria in a sectarian sedition. We all know of course how imperialism relied on the sectarian rancors to distort the truth of the national war and the just and legitimate civil war existing on the Lebanese arena.

Let Us Postpone Our Ideological Conflicts

[Question] As a political thinker, is Dr George Habash against the religious currents as a whole in the political arena?

[Answer] I hope that my aforementioned statements will not be understood to mean that in the PFLP are against any religious current. This is wrong. What is important is the political content of such a current.

Khomeini's current is one of opposition to imperialism and Zionism. There are, of course, certain aspects of Khomeini's line with which we do not agree. But we see clearly that Khomeini's current is opposed to imperialism and Zionism and this forms a meeting ground between us and all the progressive Arab forces on the one hand and the Iranian revolution on the other. Regardless of any details, what happened in Iran has, on the admission of the imperialists and the Israelis, constituted one of the biggest blows dealt to imperialism and Zionism.

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Therefore, it is not enough for a current to proceed on the basis of a religious ideology that we may oppose it. What is important to us is what this current projects at the political level.

We consider this concept one of the fundamental issues which the Popular Front is struggling to entrench in the Arab area generally.

What is fundamental insofar as we are concerned is to postpone the ideological conflicts and to try to agree on a number of political positions opposed to imperialism and Zionism. I believe that any force moving in the direction of escalating the ideological conflicts in one way or another, wittingly or unwittingly, meets with the imperialist plans in this period.

If we examine the Arab arena at the ideological level currently, we find that there are communist parties and Marxist-Leninist forces that disagree with one another, there is the Nasirist current, the socialist Arab Ba'th Party current and the religious current. What will happen if the ideological conflict process begins and turns into the main feature of the relations between these currents?

The result will be a conflict conducted at the expense of the main battle against imperialism. Let us all now raise the slogan of the meeting of all the forces opposed to imperialism and Zionism, regardless of their ideological affiliations.

Egyptian Progressive Movement Is Absent

[Question] Let us return to the decline of the so-called Arab liberation movement and let us take the Egyptian arena as an example. Don't you think that the Egyptian national reaction to President al-Sadat's separate peace with Israel has not been at the required level or at the level expected of this national reaction?

[Answer] There is, as you know, an economic, social and living crisis exerting heavy pressure on the Egyptian citizen and on the Egyptian masses. It seems that this crisis exceeds in its dimensions any crisis experienced by our Arab masses in other parts of the Arab homeland.

Therefore, and in the absence of an active and effective Egyptian revolutionary movement offering the Egyptian masses the scientific explanation for this hardship and this crisis, al-Sadat and his effective central information media have been able to mislead the masses temporarily on the grounds that the cause of all the conditions experienced by the Egyptian masses is the fact that Egypt has been in a continuous state of conflict with the Zionist entity for 30 years and that the solution to all these crises will come through putting an end to this conflict.

As I have already pointed out, the main reason is the absence of a progressive and effective national movement permeating the popular circles and offering them the scientific explanation for this crisis. But naturally, I believe that the Egyptian masses are becoming aware of the deception in which al-Sadat has engaged.

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I also believe that the element of time will act in the interest of the progressive forces in Egypt, the interest of the Egyptian masses and of the process of change in Egypt for two obvious reasons:

The first is that after the passage of a period of time, the true nature of al-Sadat's trick will become obvious to the Egyptian masses. Al-Sadat has promised that within the 1980's every Egyptian citizen will live a life of luxury. Naturally, we know that all these promises are mere illusions. We will enter 1980 in a few months and the Egyptian citizen will discover that the Camp David accords and the peace treaty have not supplied him with the solutions for the economic and social problems under which he labors.

The second reason is that with the presence of the seeds of progressive and revolutionary forces capable of explaining the true conditions of Egypt, I believe that the direction will be toward the decline of al-Sadat camp and the growth of the masses' camp in Egypt.

[Question] My bag is not empty yet. I have questions on the Lebanese issue and on the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. What is the Popular Front's position toward the issue of dispatching the Lebanese army to the south?

[Answer] The Lebanese authority's current plan for the national Palestinian and Lebanese presence, both in the south and in the entire Lebanese arena, is crystallizing and becoming clear.

The Lebanese authority is currently focusing on the issue of dispatching a strong Lebanese army to the south. The operation has reached a level whereby the Lebanese army is now nearly 23,000-man strong. The plan seeks to raise the number so that the Lebanese military establishment may have 40,000 troops. The monthly wages paid to the Lebanese soldier now amount to about 900 Lebanese pounds, not to mention the other extras, fringe benefits and services aimed at enticing people to enroll in the military establishment.

The United States is very enthusiastic for the operation of building the Lebanese military establishment and is providing this establishment with its weapon requirements. As for the structure of the leadership of this army, it is fully clear. I mean by this that it is an isolationist structure.

The tasks projected for this army and reflecting themselves in the mobilization and education process are also clear, meaning that the task of this army is to confront the armed presence. What is intended here in particular is the armed national presence.

[Question] But the Lebanese authorities have given assurances to the National Movement and the Palestinian resistance and have said that all they want is to establish Lebanese sovereignty in the south.

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[Answer] I want to ask here: Is the task of this army that of confronting the Israeli occupation of the south?

The answer is no. The task of this army is to confront the armed national Lebanese and Palestinian presence. I am sorry to say that there is a strong link between the authority's plan and what Israel and Sa'd Haddad's forces are doing. This connection is completely clear. There are the continuous Israeli attacks against the south and there are the air raids and the ground artillery shelling, etc., which create all the suffering experienced by our masses in the south at present. There is also the phenomenon of the evacuees and all the pains they are living with. There are the human victims and there are the hard living conditions of all the southern masses.

What does the Lebanese authority say here? Does it say that all the tragedies of the southern masses are the result of the Zionist aggression?

No, the Lebanese authority says that the Palestinian presence is the cause of all these aggressions.

The picture is distorted here. In the light of this, our position toward the Lebanese authority and its plans and toward the Lebanese army and its entry to the south is determined.

If the Lebanese authority and the Lebanese army want to enter the south to confront the Zionist aggression and the Israeli occupation which form the root of the tribulation of the southern masses, then we are ready to raise the slogan of a front including the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese National Movement, the Lebanese authority and all the forces to confront the Zionist occupation.

But for the authority to move under the pretext of the conditions currently existing in the south and not to confront the Israeli aggression but to confront the national presence, then it is natural that we would be against this issue in its entirety and that we would resist it with all the strength we possess.

With Establishment of Lebanese Authority

[Question] May I be distrusting and say that you are against the presence of a Lebanese army and of a Lebanese authority and against having this authority establish its sovereignty over all of Lebanon?

[Answer] Of course my words may be misunderstood. It may be said that we are against the presence of a Lebanese army and against the presence of a Lebanese authority that imposes its sovereignty over all of Lebanon.

The answer is that we support the presence of a Lebanese army and of a Lebanese authority. But what army and what authority?

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[Question] Then how can you establish compatibility between the presence of a Lebanese authority over all of Lebanon with an armed Palestinian presence on this soil?

[Answer] It is time for any Lebanese authority to realize that the Palestinian revolution is an extant reality on the Lebanese soil, that it is defending a just cause and that any stability on the Lebanese arena must proceed on the basis of this fact and the basis of acknowledging the legitimacy of the revolution's presence and of its right to defend its just cause.

Let all--both the Lebanese authority and all the Arab governments surrounding Palestine--know that without this realization, there will be no stability at the expense of striking the Palestinian revolution. Stability can be achieved only in one case, namely that of supporting the Palestinian revolution and of creating and developing the capabilities of the Arab position to confront the ceaseless Zionist aggressions against Lebanon and others--aggressions that constitute the root of all the tragedies experienced by the masses, both in the south and in the Arab area as a whole.

[Question] What is your visualization of what is currently taking place in and what is being planned for Lebanon?

[Answer] I only want to point out the link between the imperialist plan and the Israeli plan on the one hand and the Lebanese authority's plan on the other. In fact, we are now facing three plans contained within one framework.

It is true that there are three plans and it is true that the plan of the U.S. imperialism is different in detail from the Israeli plans and that the Israeli plans are different in detail from the Lebanese authority's plans. However, there is a common denominator among all these plans, namely that of destroying the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese National Movement.

Efforts of Suspect Plans

[Question] We have forgotten the [Arab] Gulf. Do you think that something is being planned and hatched for the area?

[Answer] I believe that there is an obvious link between the various imperialist plans projected at present, including the plan dealing with the Gulf area, on the one hand and Camp David on the other.

How should we fundamentally understand the Camp David issue?

The Arab masses and the Arab national forces may think predominantly that the danger of Camp David lies in recognizing the Zionist presence and normalizing the relations with the Zionist entity. This, naturally, is a very serious thing in itself. But this danger only represents one aspect of the dangerous picture.

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The other, and no less dangerous, aspect in the Camp David accords lies in the fact that these accords represent an imperialist-Zionist-Arab reactionary alliance on which imperialism wants to lean not only to entrench the Zionist entity but also to achieve all its goals in the Arab area.

This is the other aspect and it is our duty to constantly present it to the Arab masses and progressive forces.

Naturally, Israel's main goal behind the Camp David accords is to get the official recognition of the first Arab regime of the legitimacy of its presence. But what about the other imperialist goals behind the camp? And have all the U.S. imperialist efforts to bring about the Camp David accords been exerted for the sake of Israel's black eyes?

No, the other side lies in the fact that imperialism views the Camp David accords as the path through which it can realize its goals in this sensitive area with its oil resources.

The camp David path is, insofar as imperialism is concerned, the beginning of the creation of a new alliance on which it can lean to implement the rest of its plans in the area. This is why we notice that after realization of the Camp David accords, more than one imperialist plan have been active in the Arab area, including an imperialist plan in the Gulf. Moreover, the imperialist plan in Lebanon is intensifying. An imperialist-al-Sadat plan is also being currently prepared to launch an attack against the Libyan Jamahiriyah. There are also active plans throughout the Arab area and these plans rely on the Camp David accords and are linked with them.

Imperialism, which scored this victory in Camp David, has begun to feel that it can project other plans through which to achieve all its goals. This is why what the U.S. is currently projecting through (Sultan) Qabus (of Oman) is an imperialist plan completely linked with and dependent on the imperialist accomplishments made at Camp David.

My bag ran out of questions and I was about to gather my papers when the doctor smiled and hastened to ask me:

Now, tell me your opinion on the situation. Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

I said: I am in between. I am neither pessimistic nor optimistic. I am moving between the ebb and the flow, between the dark spots and the bright spots about which you have talked.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

PARIS JOURNAL'S INTERVIEW WITH YASIR 'ARAFAT

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic Oct 79 pp 28-31

[Interview with 'Yasir 'Arafat]

[Text] From its earliest days AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has been favored by special interviews or discussions with Yasir 'Arafat. Mr Shafiq al-Hut reports here the text of an interview with the leader of the Palestinian revolution. The interview, part of our continuing dialog with Mr 'Arafat, deals with some of the problems facing the Palestinian revolution at this difficult juncture in its history.

If Palestine did not play a unique role in history or occupy a unique geographical location, if it were not favored with a unique cultural heritage contested by three religions, if it had not been a bridge between East and West, North and South, as well as the heart of the Arab world, with all that entails, if Palestine were not all this and more, in short, if Palestine had not been Palestine, then its independence and the freedom of its people would have been realized long, long ago.

But Palestine remains Palestine. It is as though it had been destined to remain a "problem," fated not to become a home and nation until it had fulfilled a mission commensurate with its place in history and geography.

It seems, too, that the burden of transforming Palestine into a home and nation has fallen upon the shoulders of the man who started the Palestinian revolution, the one who is determined that this revolution shall be carried on until the final victory is achieved. He is the one who often appears to be standing on the battlefield alone, and yet at other times he seems to stand at the center of the world. The fact is that his enemy, not he, is the one who stands isolated. He is the leader of a revolution which seems to grow stronger and gather more momentum in proportion to the enemy's determination to liquidate it.

For the past 6 months the Palestinian revolution has been exposed to a bloody campaign. And while the enemy and his allies have been hoping to turn south Lebanon into a burial ground for this revolution, their hopes have been dashed as the revolution appeared alive and well, first in Vienna,

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then in Havana, Madrid, Ankara and Berlin. Tomorrow it will move to Lisbon; from there it will move to yet another location in an ever-expanding circle of support for the Palestinians and their struggle.

Berlin was the last step on Mr 'Arafat's agenda when I met with him in his office. As usual, he was occupied with ordinary problems of ordinary Palestinians: A student needing help to get into college, another asking for weapons, a third seeking aid to get married, and yet another asking for assistance to make a pilgrimage [to Mecca]. We asked him when he would be free for a lengthy interview. "Right now," he said, "as soon as I finish what I'm doing. Sit down and have a cup of coffee."

[Question] Tell us about the Havana summit conference and whether it produced positive results, especially with respect to the Palestinian problem.

[Answer] We must always remember that we are a national liberation movement and that we are a part of the international liberation movement. There are many interlocking problems, and we have an obligation to contribute to their solution with the same enthusiasm that we ask others to contribute to the solution of our problems.

With this in mind, the nonaligned nations conference was successful beyond our wildest expectations. Let me specify:

1. The fact that the conference took place and adopted a unanimous set of resolutions despite all attempts to torpedo it, is itself a spectacular achievement and a huge victory. Much of the credit for this goes to Mr Fidel Castro for his skill in organizing the conference. Our Cuban brothers managed the conference superbly. Their hospitality toward their guests was appreciated by all the participants.
2. Not only did the conference convene and go on as planned, but it concluded with a burst of vitality which will be reflected in the actions of the nonaligned nations in the next 3 years. Furthermore, the conference once again renewed its adherence to the basic principles of nonalignment, namely, its opposition to colonialism, imperialism and all forms of racism.
3. With respect to the Palestinian problem, the conference was unanimous in its determination to support any recommendation presented by the Palestinian delegation. The Camp David accords and the Sadat-Begin alliance were condemned by name in clear language. The same was true with respect to al-Sadat's position, which was deemed to be in violation of the principles of the nonaligned movement. In this connection, I must commend the tremendous efforts of our Arab brethren, particularly President Saddam Husayn of Iraq and President al-'Asad of Syria, in support of the Palestinian delegation.
4. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for bilateral discussions among the leaders and presidents of four continents. I can assert truthfully that our problem was listened to with respect and genuine concern.

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There was no controversy regarding the Palestinian issue as presented by the PLO. Our position received unanimous support.

In summary, we emerged from Havana with a good deal of political ammunition, which will serve us well as we take our case to the international community, especially the United Nations, which will discuss the Palestinian problem next November.

[Question] Could you tell us about your visit to Madrid and Ankara? How do you interpret or assess the PLO's initiative toward Western Europe, beginning with your meeting in Vienna with Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt? Some of these initiatives are causing concern that the PLO may be changing its strategy.

[Answer] Before responding to these questions, I must emphasize the need to listen to what our sources say before listening to what our opponents say. Those who oppose our struggle are careful to distort the truth and cast our initiatives in a negative light. Unfortunately, similarly erroneous information is being propagated by some of our Arabic newspapers, some of which are headquartered only a few meters away from here. The extent of distortion by our opponents, who have a penchant for misleading the public, becomes clear when one compares what our sources say with what they say. Their aim is to cast doubt on our work and to misrepresent our strategy, principles and methods.

As for our political initiative, we must distinguish between a political struggle and a political solution. From the moment our National Council adopted political struggle as an indispensable component of our total effort, we had no alternative but to wage a political battle alongside our military one. We must realize more political victories. You must remember how difficult it was to take the first step in this direction, when we decided to take our case to the United Nations. There was a great deal of skepticism about the efficacy of our move. Today everyone realizes the wisdom of that step and its beneficial impact on our case in the international political arena.

When we took that first step, the international community recognized only Israel. Much of the world public opinion had already fallen prey to Zionist propaganda. The world was ready to believe that there was no Palestine to begin with, or, at least, that Palestine and the Palestinians were finished. Slowly and gradually, and with the aid of our martyrs, we managed to change that picture and to wrench some recognition. I believe that recognizing the existence of Palestinians is the natural prelude to recognizing their rights, including their right to their own state. I must remind you that many of the countries who now support our case did so as a result of our long and patient struggle. A few years ago we had very limited relations with the Soviet Union. A few days ago, before the leaders of the socialist world and in the glare of television cameras, Mr Brezhnev, standing atop the reviewing stand as he watched the military parade marking the 30th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, greeted me with the words

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"Tovarish Arafat." I tell you this so that people may understand that our case will not move forward by itself, without labor and persistence on our part. Have you forgotten that even the Arab states came to recognize the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people only after 9 years of arduous struggle?

Let us however, return to the fundamental question. Increasing the number of countries which recognize us is one of the transitional goals established by the Palestine National Council. Everyone knows that Western Europe and the United States are the last holdouts. We are recognized by the socialist world, the nonaligned bloc and the Moslem world. It is therefore natural for us to concentrate our efforts on Europe. The atmosphere is now suitable, and we must benefit by this opportunity. Should some of the West European countries react positively to our political initiatives, it is not a case of generosity on their part; the credit goes to the martyrs in our occupied land and on the confrontation line with the enemy. It goes to the magnificent determination of our imprisoned people to remain steadfast. Those are the twin makers of victories.

One of our young men asked me about my trip to Turkey, a NATO member, and wanted to know the significance of our political initiative with that country. Others reminded me that Turkey had annexed part of the [Syrian] Iskandarun region. It is as though the Palestinian revolution were to blame for the territorial loss, or were responsible for its return. The responsibility lies with the Arab states whose embassies crowd the streets of Ankara. I, alone, the Palestinian, am charged with fulfilling our national aspirations. We are honored by this great confidence in our ability, unless, of course, the object is to place a greater burden on us than we can handle. These people would do better to permit the revolution to order its priorities in a serious and rational manner. At any rate, our occupied homeland is our first top priority. As for the fact that Turkey is a member of NATO, I beg permission to say candidly that if our political initiative is a source of discomfort to anyone, it is not to us but to Turkey. Because of its membership in NATO, Turkey's recognition [of the PLO] was all the more courageous, particularly in view of the pressure to which Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit was subjected. Everyone must understand that when we deal with any party, we do so on the basis of a fixed set of principles from which we neither hide nor depart. We do not barter over our principles. We reiterated these principles to President Ecevit, who, despite our differences over certain issues--Cyprus, to be exact--asserted that the new Turkish attitude toward the PLO was based on principle and would not be affected by transitory differences.

Following my visit to Ankara and the opening of a PLO office with all diplomatic privileges, let the skeptics say whatever they please. I am certain that Turkish-Israeli relations will gradually diminish and then cease altogether. I prefer to get things done and leave commentary to others. Time will be the final judge, and victory will go to the one who looks ahead.

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What I have said about my trip to Ankara applies to my trips to Madrid and Vienna. As one commentator--whose name I cannot recall--said: "These doors were closed in our face and open to our enemy." Today these doors are open to us. We enter them proudly, our principles intact, thanks to the blood of our martyrs. We proclaim the justice of our cause, the steadfastness of our people and the glory of the [Arab] nation.

[Question] What about the emerging support of black Americans and the resignation of Andrew Young? How do you evaluate the visit to this region by black leaders, especially Jesse Jackson? What about all the announcements about nonviolence and the cease-fire in the south [of Lebanon]?

[Answer] This is another story which has been blown up beyond all proportion by the media. This issue is simple, and our position on it is clear. I will not use this occasion to criticize those commentators--supposedly official Palestinian spokesmen--who expounded the issue in the strangest manner. Ironically, some of them were with me when I met the Reverend Jesse Jackson and were responsible for issuing the Palestinian position in the final communique at the end of all my discussions with the black leaders. Let them say whatever they wish. As I said before, my job is to make things happen. What happened after the black leader Young resigned?

There was a furor in the United States. Questions were asked about the circumstances surrounding the resignation. A new opportunity opened up to bring the Palestinian problem to a large section of American society. What were we supposed to do? Were we to stand around or to use the occasion to explain our problem and our demands, especially in view of the distorted publicity accorded our struggle prior to that? That is why we moved and invited the black leaders to come and see the situation as it really is. Our commentators, appear to forget that these leaders are not Palestinian or Arabs or residents of our refugee camps. They are American citizens, and our expectations as a result of their visit are not extravagant.

We deal with facts and with people, people who have their own views, drawbacks and conceptions. What is important is that we ask ourselves: Where did these people stand with respect to our problem before and where do they stand now? I want to ask the commentators and skeptics whether they have heard or read Jesse Jackson's statements after he returned home? If they have, they would realize the extent of the political and publicity gains we have made. The gains exceed any benefit produced by our official announcements overseas. The reason: The new voice is the voice of an American citizen, one who has credibility and a large following. It is not the voice of a professional propagandist. It is the voice of one who, like us, was the subject of deprivation, brutality and persecution. I also wonder what prompted some of the commentators to take these unjustified attitudes. Jackson and I issued a six-point communique, and I challenge all the critics to say which of these points represents a compromise or retreat from our strategic position, the decisions of our National Council or those of the joint Lebanese-Palestinian leadership. Furthermore, we were careful in the communique to adhere to our national charter. Jackson himself now defends the charter after having it read to him.

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This is quite a development in view of the fact that Zionism has long managed to scornfully mislead American public opinion by misrepresenting the charter. I repeat that we are not dreamers; neither do we believe that an acceptable solution to our problem can come easily. Supportive communiqués will not solve our problem. But does this mean that we ought to sit idly waiting for a solution from heaven knows where? No. We must fight in every arena and exploit every opening that promises to gain friends and supporters for our case. We do not demand from our friends more than they can deliver. In fact, some of our friends have delivered more than our brethren. Let us therefore take initiatives and make things happen. If there are some who would be content to play commentators, that is all right with us. But let them not forget that without us there would be nothing for them to comment about.

As for the cease-fire in the south, everyone knows that the joint Lebanese-Palestinian command has ordered a cease-fire. Everyone also knows that we have adhered to the cease-fire except when subjected to the hell of our enemy's fire. Our reasons are purely political and no secret to anyone: we want to deprive Israel and its supporters of their dishonest and oft-repeated claim that Israel fires only in retaliation. For, despite the fact that Israel has openly declared that it intends to wage a war of annihilation against us and that it would fight us everywhere, there are those who still cling to that unfounded justification. That is why we decided to adhere to a cease-fire in the south but not within our occupied lands. All this was made clear in the six-point communiqué. Even Jesse Jackson himself stated that "I could not in conscience ask the Palestinians to cease their struggle from within the occupied territory before they regain control of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and establish their independent state." Therefore, there is no change in our position. The only new development is that our message is now being heard in the United States. We now have a spokesman who will carry our message and get it through, despite all attempts by the enemy to distort and by the audience to plead ignorance.

[Question] Do you plan other trips? There are rumors of a trip to Lisbon, another to Paris and a third to the United Nations in New York.

[Answer] Our political initiatives are carefully studied and planned. Simultaneously, our planning is subject to the outcome of our ongoing contacts in the European capitals. Some of these contacts are direct; others are indirect and made possible with the aid of politically or economically influential Arab brethren in these countries. As for Lisbon, it will be the site early next month of an international conference in support of the Palestinian and Arab cause. I have been invited to attend the opening session. I also received an invitation from the Portuguese Communist Party. I expect another invitation, and that will clinch my decision.

As for my trip to Paris, I have received an invitation from our friend George Marchais, chairman of the French Communist Party. I have accepted that invitation gratefully, but have not set a date for the visit. There

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is an Arab effort, especially by Iraq, to qualitatively improve French-Palestinian relations. We are waiting to see the result.

The trip to the United Nations in New York is still under study by the Palestinian leadership, and although we have not decided on it yet, I have received an invitation from our Austrian friend Bruno Kreisky to attend a party in my honor at the UN headquarters.

[Question] What are your expectations for the coming Arab summit conference? What is the agenda? Will the conference be limited to the south Lebanon situation or will it deal with the entire region, and with the Palestinian problem heading the agenda?

[Answer] First, I must point out that we would like to have the conference held on the date set for it by the Baghdad conference. Of course we will concentrate the discussion on ways to strengthen our resistance to the daily, criminal Israeli attacks on south Lebanon. Our attention to this topic is inspired by the legendary steadfastness of the joint Palestinian-Lebanese resistance on this front. Certainly, we will want to discuss ways to continue this necessary struggle, as well as to seek means to challenge the Camp David conspiracy and the comic notion of self-rule in the occupied territory. We must intensify our struggle and develop our strategy if we are to contain the dangers of the Arab nation of this unfolding shady deal [the Camp David accords]. We will discuss the changing situation in the United States in the wake of the budding support for our case by blacks and religious leaders. We will look for ways to increase and firm up this support, as well as to direct it in positive ways to serve our just cause.

There have also been changes in the eastern front, which bears the brunt of the burden in facing the Zionist enemy following the collapse of the western front [Egypt]. This will be the important topic on the agenda. We will also discuss the necessity of mobilizing all Arab capabilities in our battle of destiny, especially the oil weapon and oil money.

[Question] How do you assess the PLO's relations with the Arab countries? What is your position on the disputes among some of the Arab states?

[Answer] The Palestinian revolution is a separate phenomenon, but it is not unrelated to developments in the Arab world. It is not a national or regional liberation movement but is intimately related to all Arab developments. In its strategic depth, our revolution is essentially Arab and national. What happens between Algeria and Morocco--particularly after the open Egyptian attempt to further inflame the situation--affects us directly and indirectly. Similarly, what happens on the eastern front affects us deeply whether we wish it or not. The same is true of the effects of the Iranian revolution on the Gulf states. For this reason, my latest trip to Tunis, Algeria and Morocco was prompted by my determination to rob al-Sadat of an opportunity to exploit the situation and to divert the attention of this part of the Arab world from our central battle of destiny. The same is true with respect to the Gulf region.

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The PLO quietly exerts tremendous efforts to return things to normalcy. Following my visit to Imam Khomeyni in Iran, I repeated what he related to me to the leaders of the Gulf states. His message: "There is no quarrel between the Iranians and the Arabs in the Gulf, because the Gulf is Moslem territory." Abu Ziyad's visit to Tehran is prompted by similar considerations: to seek stability, improve and expand relations and cement friendship on a realistic foundation. We are ever conscious that our struggle against the Zionist enemy must remain uppermost. It is a fateful struggle, threatening our nation and our land. Consequently, it is essential that we mobilize all our forces and do everything possible to insure victory.

[Question] Iraq's President Saddam Husayn reportedly stated recently that the solution to the crisis rests with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and the PLO. Any comments?

[Answer] I have talked briefly in my response to your question on my expectations for the forthcoming Arab summit conference, on the necessity of discussing the eastern front, being the first defense line following the collapse of the western front. I referred to that as perhaps the most important item on the agenda. My opinion is based on the geopolitical importance of this front, which includes Iraq, Syria, Jordan and the PLO. But I want to underscore what President Saddam Husayn meant when he made his remark. He did not imply that these four partners should act alone and in isolation from the remainder of the Arab world. Because of their position, they must be first to act, but in conjunction with all Arab capabilities.

[Question] In his visit to New York, King Husayn praised the state of Palestinian-Jordanian relations. He mentioned your meeting with him after the Havana summit as important in improving these relations. Newspaper reports indicate that you plan a new trip to Amman. What can you tell us about relations with Jordan?

[Answer] Our relations are improving constantly. We attempt to coordinate our common policy as agreed upon at the Baghdad summit. Our aim is to scuttle the Camp David agreements and the farcical idea of self-rule. We are in agreement that only the Palestinians can speak for the Palestinian people and that they have chosen the PLO as their sole, legitimate representative.

The Palestinian people's right to determine their own destiny is a God-given one, and no one can deprive them of it. We work to liberate our occupied land. The most important task is to liquidate the occupation of Palestinian and Arab land. This is more important than ever now, particularly in view of the Zionist enemy's conspiracy to give a Jewish character to our land and sacred shrines, to extend its control to our water sources, to subvert our traditions and values and to restrict our right to land ownership. We shall continue our struggle, and my visit to Amman fits in this framework, upon which we have already agreed.

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An interview with Yasir 'Arafat is never over. The rapid developments surrounding the Palestine problem make a continuous, unpredictable chain. What is new today becomes old tomorrow or perhaps in a few hours. There is no problem like Palestine, as I indicated earlier. It is the problem of our homeland, a land marked by history and unique in its geographical location. Had Palestine been a different place, the problem would have been solved a long time ago, and the Palestinian people would have had their independent and sovereign state. But Palestine is Palestine, and the journey is long.

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ALGERIA

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON DISCUSSES TRADE

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2877

[Text] Economic relations between Algeria and the European Economic Community were the focus of the talks held by Mr Claude Cheysson, European commissioner responsible for cooperation in development, with the Algerian authorities during the official visit which he made to Algeria from 15 to 17 October [MTM of 19 October, p 2817].

Mr Cheysson noted especially during a press conference given before his departure from Algeria on 17 October that "the relations between Algeria and the EEC have hardly developed at all in the past 3 years." He described as "serious and grave" the imbalance in trade between Algeria and the EEC, which reached 9 billion dinars (about 10 billion French francs) in 1978, to the detriment of Algeria.

According to Mr Cheysson, this imbalance cannot be appreciably modified over the short term, despite a predictable growth in the next few years of Algerian exports of refined petroleum products to the Common Market.

The visit of Mr Cheysson, which had been preceded by a technical mission, should permit the rapid implementation of the clauses of the cooperation agreement signed between Algeria and the EEC, particularly the utilization of 600 million dinars (about 720 million French francs) granted by the EEC to Algeria. This sum should be divided mainly among the sectors of professional training, agricultural, and road infrastructure.

The North-South dialog and the relations between the EEC and the Arab world were also touched upon during the conversations which Mr Cheysson had with Algerian officials, especially with President Chadli, during this visit. On this occasion Mr Cheysson also met a delegation of the POLISARIO Front, which was not appreciated in Rabat.

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ALGERIA

SONATRACH EXECUTIVE DISCUSSES COOPERATION

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2877

[Text] SONATRACH (Algerian National Hydrocarbon Company) seems satisfied with its technical cooperation relations with the French companies.

The results of cooperation with the French Petroleum Company (CFP) in the field of production and distribution of hydrocarbons are "satisfactory," said Mr Mohamed Mazouni, executive vice president of SONATRACH, during a conference organized on 19 October in Paris by "plus consultants," an economic studies group reported by AFP.

The director of SONATRACH also described as "promising" the results of cooperation in the gas sector with the American company El Paso and Gaz de France, for the liquefaction units of Arzew and Skikda. But, added Mr Mazouni, the price of gas must be aligned with that of petroleum and then indexed to the rate of inflation in the West and on the value of the dollar, the currency in which the prices of hydrocarbons are expressed. Concerning petroleum, Mr Mazouni expressed doubts concerning the utility of replacing the dollar by a basket of currencies to fix the price, saying, "It's six of one and a half dozen of the other."

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

SAUDI BANK LOAN--A loan of \$30 million was granted to Algeria by a consortium headed by the Saudi Bank under terms of a contract signed on 17 October at Algiers with the Credit Populaire d'Algerie. The 8-year loan, with a grace period of 4 years, carries an interest rate based on the international free market on London (Libor). It is destined for the financing the socioeconomic infrastructure in Algeria. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2877] 6108

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IRAN

UK JOURNALIST EXAMINES STRENGTH OF IRANIAN MILITARY

LD271223 London THE TIMES in English 27 Nov 79 p 8 LD

[Dispatch by Robert Fisk: "Glint of New Steel in Iran Army"]

[Text] Tehran, Nov 26--Iran's army, the broken backbone of monarchical power, is feeling its way cautiously back to life at a critical moment in the history of the Iranian revolution.

As Ayatollah Khomeyni continues to invoke the spirit of martyrdom and calls for the training of 20 million armed youths amid predictions of an American invasion, the new Islamic republican army is trying to rebuild its strength to its pre-revolution complement of 280,000 men.

After the appointment of the Bazargan government last spring, every officer from the rank of general and above was retired (more than 300 of the former shah's commanders departed in just two weeks) and conscription was lowered from two years' service to a crippling one year.

Now it has been raised to 18 months and about 200,000 men are reporting for duty, a figure much higher than that propagated in the Pentagon's most recent assessment of the Iranian Army.

Nowhere have the army's problems since the revolution been more apparent than in Kurdistan, where ad hoc units were thrown together to fight Kurdish rebels demanding autonomy for their region. So great has been the turnover of troops in the Kurdish battles that every Iranian army division, especially the 28th which is based on Sanandaj, has been involved in the fighting.

Yet Kordistan gave the army a new motivation and revived its old command and control structure. More important, it proved that the revolutionary guards, the Islamic praetorian guard which owes its allegiance primarily to the clergy and not to the government, could not cope with serious internal unrest. The guards were unable to overcome the Kurdish guerrillas.

Zealous, over-enthusiastic and inexperienced, they suffered heavily in Kurdistan, and while the force, which numbers about 8,000 acts as a

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coordinating central command, it at least has to acknowledge the necessity of maintaining a regular army.

The commander of the army's first division in Tehran, which contains the pro-Khomeyni elements of the old imperial guard, said only last week that the Kurdistan campaign had proved that "the army still has a role to play in Iran".

But maintaining an army is one thing: Maintaining its equipment is quite another. In theory, the army can mobilize up to 1,600 tanks, including 800 British-manufactured Chieftains and 600 American M60s.

Most of the American tanks are in good working order as they are comparatively easy to maintain and repair, but the Chieftains, with their sophisticated firing mechanism, may already be down to half-strength through lack of maintenance. Some of them have been cannibalized for spare parts.

The Iranians also use the American M47, which made an appearance in Kurdistan recently, but they are almost useless in armoured warfare and could not be employed against an invading force.

The new army is commanded by Major General Hossein Shaker, an allegedly genial man regarded as a good military coordinator, who was trained at Fort Leavenworth. But the old Turkish and Kurdish blood in the officer corps has been sapped away.

The only senior officer of ethnic minority extraction is Brigadier General Zahir Najad, who was promoted from colonel to command the 64th infantry division at Orumiye six months ago. He is of Turkish descent.

Some regular officers are now helping to train the revolutionary guards, who are also rumoured to have a cadre from the Palestine Liberation Organization assisting them. Certainly the guards act not just as a paramilitary gendarmarie but as a check on the army's power as well.

Dr Mustafa Chamran, the minister of defence, has bemoaned the fact that his officers are not more "revolutionary". They are certainly regarded as a moderate, politically disinterested group of men who are more concerned about the army's national prestige than in advancing the Islamic cause.

In the right environment, the army in Iran could reemerge as a credible force capable of putting up considerable resistance to a limited military assault on the country.

But once the army's power is rebuilt it may also present a political threat; and there are those in Iran who may prefer to risk the dangers of outside attack in order to safeguard their revolution.

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IRAN

DETAILS OF AUTONOMY PLAN OBTAINED BY 'THE TIMES'

LDO41121 London THE TIMES in English 4 Dec 79 p 6 LD

[Dispatch by Robert Fisk: "Iran Given Kurds' Autonomy Plan"]

[Text] Mahabad, Dec 3--At a secret meeting in the mountains of north-western Iran, leaders of the country's five million Kurds have presented the Iranian Revolutionary Council with an eight-point plan for Kurdish autonomy.

The document, which contains the most detailed and specific demands to have been made by the Kurds since their secessionist revolts began more than 30 years ago, calls for an enlarged Kurdish province. A freely-elected Kurdish assembly and a guarantee of autonomy to be written into the new Iranian constitution.

The paper listing these demands, a copy of which has been made available to THE TIMES, was handed over by Shaikh Ezzedin Hosseini, the Kurdish spiritual leader, to Mr Daryush Forahar, the Iranian government negotiator, six days ago, Mr Daryush is scheduled to return to Kurdistan tomorrow to give the Revolutionary Council's reply.

If the Kurds receive no satisfaction from this, then the latest ceasefire--which was implemented after ferocious fighting around Mahabad and Sanandaj last month--may not be renewed when it runs out in a week's time. And since voting is already taking place on Iran's new Islamic constitution, at least one of Shaikh Hosseini's demands cannot be met.

The paper was signed by Shaikh Hosseini and by leaders of the three main political groups in Kurdistan; the orthodox Communist Kurdish Democratic Party, the Marxist-Leninist Komala movement and the left-wing Fedayeen.

In a preface, it pointedly recalls that Ayatollah Khomeyni, whose revolutionary guards imposed their own ruthless pacification on parts of Kurdistan last month, has several times stated that the economic, political and military oppression which the Kurds believe they endured under the shah's regime should be removed.

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The demands are listed as follows:

1. Autonomy for Kordistan should be officially recognized and be specifically referred to in the constitution.
2. That the Kurdish region which is at present divided into four Iranian provinces, Ilam, Kermansah, Kordistan and West Azerbaijan, should be recognized as an autonomous unit.
3. A "national assembly of Kordistan" should be elected by a free, direct and secret vote. The assembly will choose an autonomous government of Kordistan which will control all economic, social and cultural life and local security in the Kurdish region.
4. The Kurdish language should be recognized as the primary language in schools and for official letters. After the fourth year of primary studies, the Persian language will also be taught in schools.
5. Part of the national budget should be devoted to Kordistan and that this regional budget should be expanded to take account of the backward economy that has been imposed on Kordistan in the past.
6. Kurdish representatives should play a role in central government.
7. Foreign policy, national defence (the army), the national economy and long-term economic planning should rest with the central government.
8. Democratic freedoms, such as freedom of the press, free speech, political and religion Iran.

The document makes it clear that the Kurds are prepared to "negotiate" on these demands and that Shaikh Hosseini might therefore be prepared to make some compromises. He would, for example, have to accept a government promise of later changes in the constitution if his first condition was to be fulfilled.

Although the eighth demand is theoretically met in the wording of the constitution, such basic rights are not going to be allowed to infringe the tenets of Islam--a caveat in the constitution of which the Kurds are deeply suspicious.

The Revolutionary Council agreed last month that the Kurds should be allowed some form of self-government but they did not specify the powers that might be given to a Kurdish assembly and no reference was made to "autonomy."

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IRAN

GOTBZADEH'S POSITION, BACKGROUND DESCRIBED

Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 30 Nov 79 p 5

[Article by Renato Ferraro, special correspondent of CORRIERE DELLA SERA; "Gotbzadeh, the 'Musketeer' Promoted by Khomeyni"]

[Text] Tehran--Sadegh Gotbzadeh, the new minister of foreign affairs, is one of Ayatollah Khomeyni's "three musketeers," along with Bani Sadr, whom he replaces as head of the Iranian diplomatic service, and Ibrahim Yadzi, the man who in turn had been replaced by Bani Sadr. During the brief Paris exile of the Imam, the three had been the spokesmen of the Islamic revolutionary movement in the West. Still remembered are the contradictions and the confusion with respect to the speeches of the three, which several times gave rise to dangerous doubts concerning the tactical decisions of the supreme leader of the movement.

Bani Sadr was, and it is not known if he still is, Khomeyni's ideological counselor in economic matters. With a degree in sociology and economics, Bani Sadr--an exile for 15 years in France--was an assistant professor. During his long stay in Paris, while remaining a convinced and fervent Moslem, he became imbued with the principles of the French Marxist school. Yadzi, instead, had spent the long years of his exile in the United States, where he organized Iranian student demonstrations.

Gotbzadeh, the third "musketeer," had a more tumultuous career. He was born in Tehran in 1936; and studied sociology in the United States and in Canada. Upon returning to Iran, he militated in the ranks of the National Front with the followers of Mosaddeq. Arrested by the political police in 1958, he fled to America, where he founded the Association of Islamic Students. Arrested during a demonstration against the shah, he was expelled from the country. The Iranian authorities confiscated his passport and he turned for help to the Syrian government, from which he obtained an identity document.

A professional agitator and revolutionary, he travelled a long time in Africa and in the Middle East, where he made contacts among the Iranian revolutionary forces and the Palestine Liberation Organization. In Cairo,

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along with Yadzi, he took a training course in guerrilla warfare.

He returned to the United States in 1967 and was again expelled. Because of differences with Iranian leftist militants, he was then expelled from the student organization. At this point the biography of the new minister becomes confused. It is known only that he went to An Najaf, in the Iraqi desert, where Ayatollah Khomeyni was exiled. From that moment on, he visited the religious leader of the opposition regularly once or twice a year.

As a result of these frequent contacts with Khomeyni, he was chosen as counselor and spokesman during the Paris period. He returned to Iran in February as part of the ayatollah's retinue. After the revolution, he was put in charge of radio and television, an assignment that did not come up to his ambitions, but still a very important one because of the possibility of molding public opinion, an assignment that Qotbzadeh decided to retain when he became minister of foreign affairs.

Unlike Bani Sadr, Qotbzadeh seems to be a faithful executor of the directives of the Imam, as he, himself, told the journalists yesterday.

It is nevertheless foreseen that in the practical implementation of the Qom directives, he will encounter some difficulty. In meetings with Western diplomats, he will in fact have to translate into rational language the mystical principles that Khomeyni thinks he reads in the holy Koran.

The ideologist Bani Sadr was "fired" as minister of foreign affairs in precisely the same manner as he had "fired" Mehdi Bazargan. For months he had attacked his radical positions, accusing him of insufficient revolutionary spirit and of not knowing how to interpret the will of Khomeyni.

The Bani Sadr dismissals caused the former head of government to rejoice. But, in spite of his "temporary" exit from the scene, Bazargan does not at all believe that he no longer has a political role. On the contrary, he thinks that he is the man around whom the moderate lay and religious forces, represented in particular by Shariat-Madari, the most influential ayatollah after Khomeyni, will group. Bazargan is negotiating a cooperation pact with the Karim Sanjabi National Front, the movement for civil and legal rights.

However, it does not seem, at least for now, that he will have much success, because Sanjabi, too, aspires to head the opposition; and the other lay moderates consider Bazargan to be too close to the religious leaders, in spite of his dismissal from the government. "During the entire time that he headed the executive," they say, "he proved to be too submissive to the ayatollah. It is his nature and he cannot change. It is not

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in him to be a political leader, only a capable and intelligent executor."

Another man who is trying to return to the forefront is Shapour Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister, who is inundating Iran with his insurrectional messages that are recorded on cassettes. Bakhtiar, however, is unanimously considered by observers as "done for," because he was too involved with the hated Pahlevi government.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

REZA SHAH'S HOUSE FOR SALE--A two-hectare property, with a fine Dutch-style house, is for sale at Mountainview, in Johannesburg, for 600,000 rands. It was the residence of former Shah of Iran Reza, who died in 1944. The Iranian Government had converted the property into a museum to the glory of the shah, and it had been maintained with filial piety until last January's revolution. Today, the property is up for sale, along with the Iranian consulate general premises in Melrose, another area in Johannesburg. The latter is known as the "White House." It is offered for the price of 250,000 rand. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 23 Nov 79 p 3287]

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LIBYA

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM HELD ON 'GREEN BOOK'

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2882

[Text] An international symposium on Colonel Qadhdhafi's "Green Book," held in Benghazi from 1 to 4 October, brought some 400 scholars, teachers and sociologists together from 40 countries. Several French professors participated in the sessions.

It should be recalled that the "Green Book" is based on the "third universal theory" which pits capitalism and communism against one another, drawing its inspiration from the Koran and Arab-Islamic traditions. The first volume deals with "democracy by means of the people's government, the second has to do with the solution of the economic problem by socialism and the third, just published, discusses the organization of social life.

While Western speakers criticized parliamentary government and the party system, the Third World speakers, particularly the Arabs, emphasized the failure of the single party experiment in countries in the socialist bloc and the Third World in establishing democracy in those countries.

On the other hand, the speakers hesitated to make a statement on the application of Libyan theories outside of Libya and on their possible negative aspects. The only point to give rise to a lively discussion between Colonel Qadhdhafi and the speakers, mainly the women, was his chapter on the emancipation of women. Furthermore, Colonel Qadhdhafi lamented "the lack of criticism and the effusive praise for his book." He added: "The 'Green Book' is not an attempt to provide a final solution to the evils afflicting mankind. It is one alternative among others. The result of the practical application of this theory will determine its success or failure."

The final communique published at the conclusion of the symposium included four resolutions:

- 1) the publication of the studies and speeches delivered at the colloquium in Arabic and foreign languages and their distribution to institutes and universities so that they might serve as reference works;

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- 2) the establishment of a liaison committee to be in charge of the holding of the next symposium in October 1981 at El Fateh University (Tripoli);
- 3) the introduction of studies and speeches from the colloquium along with explanations given by "the revolutionary thinker Mu'ammur Qadhdhafi" as an appendix to the explanations of the "Green Book," considering the quality of certain studies; and
- 4) the holding of seminars at certain Arab and foreign universities in order to grant more attention to the principles of the "Green Book" and their effect on the political, economic and social transformation of the Jamahiriya.

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

ABOLITION OF LEGAL PROFESSION--Colonel Qadhafi met in Tripoli with the Council of the Union of Libyan Attorneys and expressed the opinion that the establishment of the people's government in Libya implied the abolition of the traditional system of private law practice. However, Colonel Qadhafi did not specify which formula will be chosen to replace the profession of private attorney and did not say whether defense attorneys will be put into a cooperative, as was the case with all commerce. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2882] 11,464

ITALIAN PILOTS IN LIBYA--According to the Dutch newspaper NRC HANDELSBLAD, some 50 former pilots from the Italian Air Force are now acting as military instructors in Libya. According to the newspaper, the pilots are officially in the service of Aero Leasing Italiana in Rome, which is paid by the Libyan Government on the basis of \$2,500 per month per pilot. The Dutch newspaper goes on to say that 250 former technicians from the Italian Air Force are working in Libya and that 100 members of the Italian Air Force have submitted their resignations. The Italian pilots are reportedly dissatisfied with their treatment. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2882] 11,464

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MAURITANIA

BRIEFS

MAURITANIA UNDERGOING SERIOUS CRISIS--Pierre Messmer, former French prime minister, who was accompanying a parliamentary delegation to Morocco, in answer to a question, gave his opinion on the current situation in Mauritania, a country he knows very well, having held high functions there for 4 years. He stated that Mauritania was going through "the greatest crisis of its history since its founding, that is, since 1912. For a long time," he said, "Mauritania was considered by France, by Morocco, and by the Mauriticians themselves much more a military march than a genuine political entity... The ethnic composition of the country constitutes an added difficulty." After having underlined that for many Mauriticians, the problem at issue is simply one of survival, Messmer was of the opinion that it was "inevitable that, in its present state of physical weakness, added to political fragility, the desire of the Mauriticians was to steer clear of the Sahara conflict." [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Oct 79 p 2822] 9330

SNIM DEFICIT--According to the balance-sheet for fiscal 1978, published 3 October at Nouakchott, the Mauritanian National Mining and Industrial Company [SNIM] registered in 1978 a financial loss of nearly 700 million ouguiya. The deficit of this largest Mauritanian company increased by 570 million ouguiya in comparison with 1977. This is principally due, according to SNIM, to the decrease in the volume of business (5 billion ouguiya compared to 6.5 in 1977), to the drop in the parity of the ouguiya in relation to European currencies, to the large drop in the price of iron on the world market, and finally to the consequences of the war in the Western Sahara. SNIM production reached only 6.5 million tons of ore instead of the ten million tons planned in 1978, a goal which the company should, however, be able to reach this year. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Oct 79 p 2822] 9330

DROUGHT ACCELERATES RURAL EXODUS--The nomads who constituted 65 percent of the Mauritanian population in 1965 represent no more than 36 percent of the population 11 years later (end of December, 1976, the date of the latest census). The country numbers about 906,000 sedentary residents, 446,000 nomads within its borders and 67,000 others who spend a part of the year

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abroad, particularly in Mali. Nouakchott had 5,800 inhabitants in 1961, 12,300 in 1964, 104,000 in February, 1975, and 133,000 at the beginning of 1977...In 15 years, its average rate of growth has been 11 percent. The rate of growth of towns like Nouadhibou (22,000 inhabitants), Zouerate (17,500 inhabitants) and Akjoujt (8,000 inhabitants) has been 9.3 percent a year. The average rate of growth of the population or urban centers was 10.2 percent. The most populated regions of the country are in the Southwest (216,000 inhabitants in the Trarza and Rosso regions) and in the Southeast. The region of Tiris-Zemmour, that of F'Derik-Zouerate, which is half the size of France, now numbers only 742 nomads. In 1965, the country had 279,000 jobs in the traditional sector and 32,400 in the modern sector. At the end of 1976, the first had only 224,000 jobs, but the second had 48,700 jobs, of which 39,700 were in urban centers. In rural areas, the shrinkage of the job market affected husbandry (82,000 as compared to 122,000 in 1965) as well as agriculture (65,000 against 75,000). The number of artisans (32,000) remained unchanged. In urban centers, there were 13,500 jobs in small commerce, 8,900 in the administration, 5,500 in construction and industry, 5,500 in mining, 1,300 in transportation, 1,600 in the fishing sector, and 1,300 in banks, insurance and commerce. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Oct 79 p 2822] 9330

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT--Government recommendations: Mohamed El Mocktar Ould Zamel, the Mauritanian minister of Mines and Industry, chaired the fifth meeting of the Study Committee on Industrial Promotion which will soon present to the Mauritanian government a report containing certain recommendations, particularly the creation of a financial institution appropriate for industrial development and an agency for industrial promotion. The committee has indeed pointed out that in all the developing countries such structures exist and contribute effectively to the development of small and medium-sized enterprise. It also recommended that the government should grant priority to industry processing local raw materials for domestic consumption. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Oct 79 p 2822] 9330

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MOROCCO

MOROCCAN-EEC RELATIONS EXAMINED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2879

[Text] Mr Claude Cheysson, EEC development commissioner, visited Rabat from 17 to 19 October, where he talked with Moroccan officials concerning Morocco-EEC relations, and the extension of the Common Market to Spain, Greece, and Portugal, as well as the resumption of the North-South dialog.

In a press conference given in Rabat on 19 October, Mr Cheysson expressed the view that "Morocco is right not to be satisfied with its association with the EEC," adding that the deficit registered by the Moroccan balance of trade with the EEC countries (about 4.5 billion French francs in 1977) was a "serious matter" and that "a joint search for mutually satisfactory solutions" was worthwhile.

More Than Half of Trade With the EEC

On the occasion of this visit, the Moroccan national agency MAGHREB ARABE PRESSE [MAP] disseminated a dispatch, datelined Brussels, detailing Moroccan trade with the European Community as well as technical and financial cooperation.

Trade between Morocco and the EEC saw great growth since 1973. A softening in trade was nevertheless noted during 1978.

Moroccan imports from the EEC, which consisted mostly of industrial products, tripled between 1973 and 1977. The proportion of the European Community in total Moroccan imports rose by about half.

Morocco exports to the EEC primarily raw and processed agricultural products, raw materials of mineral origin, and certain finished products, like textiles and Morocco leather products. The European Community is the main customer of Morocco, with 57 percent of its total sales. It should be noted that about 50 percent of the total exports of Morocco to the Common Market were destined for France.

Exports from Morocco to the EEC rose steadily between 1970 and 1974. After that they stagnated. The deficit of the Moroccan balance of trade

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thus became steadily more serious. It even seems that it represents 47 percent of the total foreign trade deficit of Morocco. An improvement was shown in 1978, however. This improvement, the MAP emphasizes, is due to decisions taken by the Moroccan Government in the framework of the Rebound Plan (1978-1980).

The main causes of this stagnation are to be found mainly at the level of the mechanisms of the common agricultural policy of the Nine as well as of tariff concessions granted to various EEC partners. As an example, the community policy toward three Moroccan products, namely prunes, tomatoes, and canned sardines, is analyzed.

For prunes, the freeze of the tariff reduction to a ceiling of 80 percent, the concessions granted to products of competing countries (Spain, Israel) and the rise in the penetration bonus for Community producers, deeply affect Moroccan exports to the profit of its competitors and this precisely at a time when the country has undertaken a reconversion of its orchards for the purpose of improving quality.

With regard to canned sardines, it is noted that the complexity of the system of management of the quotas is translated in practice into obstacles to the conclusion of long-term contracts, added to the strictness of the system of distribution of the quotas, which prevents the Moroccan product from adapting itself to and following the trends in demand.

Concerning tomatoes, the constant rise in the reference price (to protect particularly Dutch tomatoes), associated with the strict calendar of the tariff concession (60 percent from 15 November to 30 April) penalizes the exportation of Moroccan tomatoes.

Expansion of the Community Threatens Moroccan Production

This situation runs the risk of becoming worse through the increased supply once the EEC is enlarged. Actually the economic configuration of the candidate countries (Greece, Spain, and Portugal) is comparable in many respects to that of Morocco.

In this regard four common points merit attention: a heavy weight of the agricultural sector, a predominance of manufactured products in industrial exports, a strong orientation of foreign trade toward the Common Market, and finally a storehouse of labor for the EEC.

The breadth, size, and complexity of the problems raised by the enlargement of the EEC require an urgent, overall approach, based on constant joint planning and trade between Morocco and EEC. If a procedure of joint planning is not set up, the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors of Morocco risk suffocation, and as a result, Moroccan production would undergo total disorganization.

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The Beginnings of Technical and Financial Cooperation

Technical and Financial cooperation between Morocco and the European Community began to be implemented this year. A first financing contract was signed last 12 June in Luxemburg under the aegis of the Morocco-EEC Council of Cooperation.

It concerns the Jorf Lasfar port project. The EEC is participating in the financing of this project by contributing 40 million accounting units in the form of loans granted by the European Investment Bank and 14 million accounting units in the form of loans under special conditions.

It is also planned for European experts to make visits to Morocco soon to evaluate and begin work on the instruction of the other projects contemplated by the Moroccan Government. Among the investment projects there is a transportation network for the ONE [National Electricity Office], supply of potable water to the towns of Safi, Al Hoceima and Nador, port super-structures and risk capital for ODI [Office of Industrial Development].

As for technical cooperation activities, the Brussels Commission of European Communities made two financing decisions last 28 September.

One is a subsidy of 2,750,000 European accounting units [UCE] destined for the financing of industrial promotion activities, comprising technical assistance and promotion of cooperation with foreign industrialists, mainly in the EEC.

The other is a subsidy of 140,000 UCE, granted to enable the Moroccan Government to finance for a period of 2 years the technical assistance necessary to set up the Moroccan Center for Export Promotion.

The largest projects, both in cost and in social effect, concern professional training. They comprise technical assistance to and the equipment of ten institutes of applied technology which will soon be created in Morocco.

Other projects are also contemplated: manufacture of vaccines and veterinary serums, official chemical analysis and research laboratories, a cereal technology laboratory, cartography of the soils of Morocco, and other nonreimbursable assistance concerning promotion of trade and the Institute of Study and Research for Arabization.

The sums allocated for this cooperation are modest compared with the needs of Morocco, the MAGHREB ARAB PRESS emphasizes.

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MOROCCO

BRIEFS

AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ--Having returned from Baghdad, where he presided over Morocco Day at the International Fair, Mr Moussa Saadi, minister of energy and mines, announced on 11 October in Rabat that an agreement had been signed concerning the supply of Iraqi crude petroleum to Morocco. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79, p 2880] 6108

INDUSTRIAL ZONES--To be established in 25 towns. The establishment of industrial zones, within the framework of the policy of industrialization and economic development of the country, was the subject of a working session on 11 October in Rabat, presided over by the prime minister, Mr Maati Bouabid. During this meeting, Mr Azzeddine Guessous, minister of trade and industry, spoke on the present situation of Moroccan industry, emphasizing that the strongest stimulant to industrialization was precisely the establishment of industrial zones and endowing them with basic equipment. He announced that his department, in collaboration with the ODI [Office of Industrial Development] had completed an overall study of the needs of the country with respect to industrial zones. It was decided to create such zones in 25 towns. The minister of industry and trade is charged with coordinating the activities of a commission created for this purpose and comprising representatives of the two ministries concerned. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2880] 6108

ITALIAN SOLAR ENERGY MISSION--On the initiative of the Italian minister of foreign trade, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Rabat, the Italian Institute of Foreign Trade and representatives of the private industrial sector (the Montedison company), a solar energy study mission spent last week in Morocco. The purpose of the mission was to study the possibilities of exploiting solar energy in Morocco in the fields of agriculture, industry, and building, taking into account the possibilities offered by Italian technology. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Oct 79 p 2880] 6108

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WESTERN SAHARA

REAL WAR SAID TO BE BEGINNING IN SAHARA

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 31 Oct 79 pp 24-25

[Article by special correspondent Raphael Mergui: "And in Sahara the Real War is Beginning"]

[Text] Suffice it to read a map and consider the latest confrontation, the 6 October Smara in particular, to draw the conclusion that at this point the Polisario forces are partially in the interior of Moroccan Sahara. An officer whose liking for truth has not lowered in the least his determination confided to me that "The Polisario keeps in Algeria its logistics and its sick. Its men are among us." One sentence recurs endlessly in talks with Moroccan officers: "The real war is only beginning. . . ." Before the Smara battle, there took place, in August and September, the clashes of Bir Anzaran, Lebouirate, and Zag. Immediately after them, there was Tizgui Remz and Mahbes. Forget about the harassment of posts or attacks on convoys. A new war has truly broken out. Escalating its activities by several notches, the Polisario has committed to all these battles from 1,000 to 5,000 men. Today it has 12,000 troops largely recruited in the half-starved Sahel.

Large-scale attacks succeed one another at a rhythm too rapid to have been exclusively prepared on Algerian territory. In particular, the Polisario has two firm bases in Aussert, the former Tiris el-Gharbia, and in Ouarkziz. Located south of the Draa Wadi, the Ouarkziz area is a mountain chain which splits the Sahara going from east to west. It has no less than 10 forgotten passes, all of them under Polisario control. Quite undisturbed, using bulldozers, the Polisario has organized its bases here. The targets chosen by the Front over the past three months clearly show that it is attempting to complete its implantation through the occupation of key or strategic positions (Bir Anzaran, Zag, Mahbes, and the Tizgui Remz Pass). The taking of Smara was to provide this "liberated" area with a political capital.

Naturally, the Polisario maintains its umbilical cord in Algeria (training camps and logistics).

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In any case, firmly entrenched in its mountain redoubts, sheltered from air power and armor, it can be displaced only by foot soldiers. Such a "piece-meal" clearing would require thousands of soldiers waging blood-letting battles, hand to hand. "Such implantation," an officer told me, "offers, nevertheless, an advantage to the Moroccans: Today the Polisario has an address."

Actually, it is quite probable that the Front has woven a close network of advance posts around Smara which remains threatened. The army deemed it hazardous to let us see the battlefields outside the city. The C 130 which brought us here had to land and take off in spirals to remain outside the range of the Polisario Front SAM 7.

Therefore, able to avoid pursuits quite quickly and seek refuge in bases not far from its targets, the Polisario did not experience losses as heavy as those projected by the Moroccan Ministry of Information. The Smara battle provides many indications in this respect. The Polisario forces did enter the town without, however, occupying or hemming it in, as it claimed. The city has remained untouched and shows no trace of battle. The airport strip which was damaged was closed for civilian aircraft until 10 October. The 5,000 guerrillas who, split in three columns, converged on Smara in the night of 6 October, not only crossed a security line considered unbreachable but were detected only at the last moment, betrayed by the noise of their engines, contrary to what Mr M'hamed Boucetta, Moroccan minister of state in charge of foreign affairs and cooperation, said in the United Nations. Thrown back after 36 hours of heavy fighting, thanks to the intervention of the Mirages F 1 and the courage of the defenders of Smara, the attackers do not appear to have panicked.

First of all, as is customary, the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) took no prisoners. The systematic removal of the dead and wounded by the Polisario accounts for a great deal in this matter. At Bir Anzaran, where hand to hand combat was particularly extensive, the Front had taken the time to remove its dead and its wounded. Nevertheless, it is strange that a rebel army, regardless of how well it is organized, could lose 1,000 men without, apparently, letting a single prisoner fall into enemy hands.

Secondly, all the war trophies that the FAR officers could show us amounted to no more than 19 destroyed jeeps, meticulously lined up in a Smara barracks. Yet, both a reliable source and films made by the Mirage show that the latter destroyed no less than 200 Polisario vehicles. The key to the mystery is strange: The FAR are unable to display more wrecked Land Rovers because the Polisario removed them as well. . . . Fighting during the day it recovers the wrecks at night. . . .

Thirdly, had the Polisario lost in Smara one man out of four or five, it would have been so demoralized that it would have certainly been unable to attack Mahbes and the Tizgui Remz Pass shortly afterwards. There is no army in the world able to withstand such losses without suffering deep psychological damages.

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Smara is a Moroccan half victory but even the Ministry of Information was unable to exploit it as such. Rabat faces a new challenge. So far, Hassan II has been able to correct severely compromising situations through spectaculars which are successful because they appeal to the Moroccan attachment to "their" Sahara: The Green March and annexation of Rio de Oro. Today no one knows what trump the sovereign holds in reserve. Yet, had a political solution been dragged out, and if Algeria were not to change its positions, a reconversion of the army and a change in military doctrine would inevitably become items on the agenda.

President Carter's very controversial decision of 22 October to recommend to the American congress the shipping to Morocco of OV 10 reconnaissance airplanes and Cobra combat helicopters has been good news for Rabat. Involving Washington further, it is a very needed Moroccan diplomatic victory. On the military level the OV 10 would fill a very substantial gap, as confirmed by Smara, in the deployment of Moroccan defenses. As to the Cobras, which proved their terrible effectiveness in Vietnam, they would reinforce the air force which looks becoming the spearpoint of the FAR. This shall be discussed further.

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WESTERN SAHARA

EUROPEAN LEFT'S SILENCE IN FACE OF SAHARAN WAR 'SCANDALOUS'

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 12-25 Nov 79 pp 26, 27

[Article by Jean Ziegler: "Western Sahara: Enough Bloodshed!"]

[Text] A professor of sociology at the University of Geneva and at the Institute of Development Studies of Geneva, Jean Ziegler is a Socialist Party deputy to the Confederal Parliament. In particular he has written: "Les Vivants et les Morts" [The Living and the Dead], "Une Suisse audessus de tout soupcon" ["A Switzerland Beyond Suspicion"], "Main Basse sur l'Afrique" ["The Looting of Africa"] and "Le Pouvoir Africain" ["African Power"] to which additions have just been made and reissued in the "Points" series by Seuil publishers. Jean Ziegler has just returned from a lecture tour at American universities.

More than 900 Moroccan occupiers killed at Smara in October; 653 Moroccan soldiers killed at Zag, headquarters of the South Moroccan command, in September; 532 others fallen at Lebouirate at the end of August; 125 more dead in the crushed casemates of Bir-Enzarane; 227 during the attack on Tarfaya last June... For their part, the Moroccans announced that in the battle of Smara alone nearly 1,000 enemies were "disabled." It matters little whether the figures furnished by the two belligerents--the Polisario Front, the Moroccan Army--were correct or not, what matters is the unending litany of death which for 5 years, week after week, has put hundred of Maghreb families into mourning.

The European anticolonialist, anti-imperialist Left's silence in the face of the Saharan tragedy strikes me as totally scandalous. I have returned from a stay of several weeks at United States universities and institutes where research is devoted to the societies of the Third World. It is the Western Sahara conflict which is of concern today to American university professors, to the militants, more than Southern Africa, more than Ethiopia. It is about the European, the French stance in the face of that conflict that the visitor is questioned. An intensive debate is taking place within North American intellectual opinion. Everyone knows Morocco will not get out of the Saharan mess without American weapons--attack helicopters, specialized

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detection aircraft, materiel for electronic surveillance devised for desert warfare--which it has been insistently requesting for 2 years. The pro-Moroccan lobby is powerful: It is made up of some of the most active Zionist organizations, by prestigious university professors and by a substantial conservative Right which includes many representatives in Congress. An article in the NEW YORK TIMES* signed by Professor John Damis, an influential specialist in Maghreb affairs, summed up the stands of the pro-Moroccan forces: A Moroccan defeat in the Sahara runs the risk of costing Hassan II his throne; now, the monarch is one of the rare friends America can count on in the Third World. His role was a decisive one in preparing the alliance between Sadat and Begin. In short, the Carter administration--if it wishes to regain its credibility in Africa and the Middle East--must turn to a policy of active support to King Hassan II.

But a strong current of opinion--in which university professors and black militants are heavily represented--is endeavoring to counter the actions of the pro-Moroccan lobby. In that current's view, Hassan II remains the one responsible for the assassination of Mehdi Ben Barka in 1965; he embodies a backward regime, is an enemy of human rights and of fair distribution of national income. The Carter administration--which displayed wise restraint at the time of the Shah of Iran's downfall and that of Somoza in Nicaragua--must remain reserved with respect to Hassan II's regime.

The debate taking place in the United States is far from being an academic one; in September the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Africa concluded its hearings on the present practice of "restrictive arms sales" in northwestern Africa. A majority of the "witnesses" questioned by the subcommittee concluded that this practice was ineffective. This means that the majority of the individuals summoned and questioned by the representatives advised a policy of active support to Morocco. I do not know what the recommendations formulated by the subcommittee will be; even less what the House's decisions will be or later those of Congress. One thing is certain: A revision of American policy in Western Sahara and throughout northwest Africa is under way. Already last 23 October President Carter requested Congressional authorization to go ahead with an initial delivery to Morocco of a number of "Cobra" helicopters and "OV-10" planes.

How can one break down European public opinion's indifference--in particular that of France--in the face of that conflict? How can the Left--parties, trade unions, anti-imperialist movements, churches--be mobilized in the face of the war's escalation and the possible genocide of the Western Saharan people? An analysis of the ratio of strength between Algeria, a privileged ally, with Libya, of the Polisario Front on the one hand and Morocco on the other, seems relatively secondary. What people must be made aware of is the existence of a Western Saharan people. For over 400 years the Western Saharans have been nomads over a territory of more than 270,000 square kilometers. They have created one of the richest, most original, most significant cultures in the universe. The present Western Saharan people and their avant-garde--the Polisario Front--are the heirs of this very complex nomadic civilization.

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The Europeans, who are the heirs of many sedentary, agrarian and urban societies, analyze the world through concepts--of state, nation, territory, people--stemming from their own social experience.

In other words: The ethnocentric limitation of their perception of history limits their capacity for political analysis; they have difficulty in conceiving that a nomadic society, having for centuries ignored borders, can today furnish the social, ideological matrix for an authentic national liberation movement. Now, in the world of market rationality, state violence, in which we live, no people survives without the framework of a state. The young Western Saharans who emerged from the first Spanish schools of the 1960's understood that. They have gradually transformed a declining nomadic society, one of clans, into a new, original, unprecedented society in which the values of nomadic solidarity join with the rigorous demands for advancement, for autonomy for the individual. The instrument for this transformation is the Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Harha and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front).

Let us conclude: It is useless to want to reduce the Western Saharan people and their liberation front to an artificial creation of Algeria. As in the case of the Palestinians, here too reality is stubborn: This people, this front do exist. They have been struggling since 1973, since the generalized insurrection against the Spanish occupier. Nothing nor anyone--not even the United States' commitment to the Moroccan side--will crush their determination. Without the diplomatic, military support of France to Morocco, without the discreet support of other EEC [European Economic Community] governments to the Moroccan side, the war and its interminable litany of death would cease. In our democratic societies, public opinion--and especially that of the Left has a historic responsibility today: That of imposing an immediate halt to the fighting, the departure of the occupation troops and recognition of the Western Saharan Democratic Arab Republic by the community of nations as a whole.

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