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JPRS L/9098

20 May 1980

# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 17/80)



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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

IMPACT OF IRAN FAILURES ON ARAB VIEW OF U.S. DISCUSSED

LD281011 London THE TIMES in English 28 Apr 80 p 14

[Article by Muhammad Haykal, former editor of Cairo AL-AHRAM: "Is This American Failure One Too Many"]

[Text] It is as true in the Arab world as it is anywhere else that nothing succeeds like success--and nothing fails like failure. The bungled American attempt to free the hostages by force, however, is much more serious than an isolated case of failure from which, after all, no one is immuned. But when failure follows upon failure, the conviction sets in that this pattern is the rule rather than the exception.

Even before his abortive bid to rescue the hostages from Tehran, President Carter's policies faced an acute crisis of credibility in the Arab world. The Arab reaction to this latest failure can be understood only if we pass in quick review over the reasons for this crisis.

Most people in the Arab world which, because of oil has become one of the most sensitive regions for the West, perceive Mr Carter's policies in the following terms:

In Camp David, Mr Carter departed from what had until then been a basic rule in American Mideast policy: not to push for a separate peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. I remember Dr Henry Kissinger telling me when he was still secretary of state that "...The United States is steadfastly opposed to a separate peace between Egypt and Israel for three obvious reasons: first, such a peace would isolate Egypt from the rest of the Arab world, which is detrimental to Egypt's interests, second, it would cancel Egypt's moderating influence over the other Arab parties to the problem, which is as harmful to them as it is to the United States, and third, it would not produce peace, because the conflict is not only between Egypt and Israel, but is something wider.

When Mr Carter, after 18 months in office, abruptly departed from that rule, the only explanation the Arabs could see was that the American President, whose policies were all coming unstuck, wanted to achieve a quick victory in the Middle East crisis with an eye more on his own electoral interests than on United States strategic interests.

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Not only did the dangers that Dr Kissinger and others saw materialize, but the Arabs found themselves under pressure by the Americans to back the Camp David accords which for them represented, quite apart from the separate peace between Egypt and Israel, a complete abandonment of all aspects of the Palestinian cause.

The moderate Arab countries, already worried at this amputation of Egypt from the Arab body, began to feel they were under pressure not only to forget about the Palestinian cause but to endanger the stability of their own regimes which, in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, are in fact not much more than families and tribes with flags. Their only claim to legitimacy lies on a half-traditional, half-religious basis and, should they abandon their responsibilities towards the holy places of Islam--including Jerusalem--nothing much would be left of their basis to legitimacy. Any American arm-twisting on this issue was doomed not only to fail but also to generate deep resentment and bitterness.

American policy towards the revolution in Iran, especially as regards the shah, eroded their confidence in the United States still further. Quite apart from any value judgments on this regime or the methods it employed, no Arab ruler could ignore the words of General Ruba'i, former commander of the Iranian air force, before a revolutionary tribunal:

"The United States took the shah by the scruff of his neck and threw him out of Iran like a dead mouse."

There is a measure of truth in what he said. After backing the shah unconditionally until as late as January 1979, the United States suddenly dropped him in a last-ditch effort to save the army. But as the Iranian revolution gained momentum, it swept the whole deal along with it. Not only was the shah discarded like a dead mouse, but the Iranian army collapsed--at least as a force on which the United States could rely and which it could use in any future designs.

And so every Arab ruler understood clearly that the United States would not stand by any of its friends who faced an internal danger.

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan at the end of 1979 the Arab world saw the United States standing helplessly by as a Middle Eastern country succumbed to a danger coming without. Some months ago I happened to be in the Gulf area, when the advance units of the United States Fifth Fleet, diverted from the Pacific across the Indian Ocean, steamed into the Gulf. Commenting on the event, the Kuwaiti foreign minister, Sheykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, told me: "The Russians are over there in Afghanistan, not here in the Gulf. If they wanted to fight them that is where the Americans should have gone, not here." Sheykh al-Sabah's words express the viewpoint of the governments in the area, who have come to believe that they can rely only on themselves when a question of internal danger arises.

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As to dangers from without, the oil producers cannot defend the oil fields against the Soviet Union. Any such confrontation must be undertaken by the Americans.

To add insult to injury, the Americans were now exhorting the Arab world against the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan in the name of Islam. The Arabs were simply not prepared to see Mr Carter in the role of protector of Islam when it was his policies which had led to the issue of Jerusalem, a holy shrine for Islam, being placed in cold storage at Camp David.

How could they respond to Mr Carter's battle cry in the name of Kabul, which had been invaded for a matter of weeks, and forget Jerusalem which has been under occupation for years, with no end in sight? They refused all efforts to recruit them in an Islamic pact directed against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, feeling that they were being asked to fight with the Koran a battle which the U.S. refused to wage with its arsenal of power.

This is where things stood before the hostage crisis became acute. In an earlier stage most Arab countries could not keep up with the sabre-rattling from Washington, which was rising to a crescendo days after the hostages had been taken. They felt the situation was difficult for the Americans. Armed intervention appeared impossible because it could spark off an explosion extending far beyond the borders of Iran. Waging a punitive strike would have been a sterile act, whose only purpose would be to let off steam. A maritime blockade seemed equally unlikely, as it would have led to complete chaos in one of the most sensitive areas of the world.

But the Arabs could not shake off the feeling that something was going to happen.

We must remember that Arab feelings towards the Islamic revolution in Iran were ambivalent. Those who approved of its Islamic character disapproved of its revolutionary fervour, while those who admired its revolutionary fervour had their reservations about its religious character. It must be said in all fairness that the thrust of Iranian revolution and the violence that accompanied it did not make matters easy for the area surrounding it, who regarded what was happening in Iran with a mixture of admiration and doubt, awe and fear. Added to that was the feeling of waiting for the unknown to happen.

But whatever form the unknown could take, Arabs felt the Americans would not resort to force. They believed the time for force was past, if only because activities in the political and diplomatic areas had led to some progress on the hostage question. Following efforts by the United Nations, its secretary-general and the special commission he had dispatched to Iran, Khomeyni had announced that the hostages would be the first item on the agenda of the new Iranian parliament scheduled to meet in the second half of May.



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While the Americans did not object to this decision, President Carter suddenly came up with the new demand that the hostages be transferred from the authority of the students occupying the American Embassy to that of the Revolutionary Council. As Mr Bani Sadr explained to all mediators, neither he as an elected president nor the council could keep hostages. If the students could defy international law by taking hostages, the authority of the state could not. To the astonishment of many people, President Carter persisted in his demand--not that the hostages be released immediately but that they be transferred to the custody of the Revolutionary Council. It was clear that he was under the pressures of the primaries. Most people in the Arab world thought that these pressures would not push him much further than psychological, economic or political warfare in collaboration with some of America's allies in the West.

As it happened, they were wrong! Not only did he try to use military force and fail lamentably--which was bad enough politically--but even worse was the excuse he gave for this failure. The metaphysical belief in American power and technology was badly shaken. Obviously a plan of this importance and sensitivity had received the very best in the way of America's human and material resources. In addition, the regional stage was all set, with American military bases throughout the region, not to mention the naval units scattered around the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, in spite of that the operation failed "because 40 per cent of the equipment used at the most sensitive stage of the operation broke down--three out of eight helicopters." In the ensuing confusion, "American planes collided together" and the bodies of American marines killed in the operation were left behind. The general impression in the Arab world--and even if it is only a first impression its impact is bound to remain for a long time to come--that those who depend on American power to protect them from external dangers are entitled, starting now, to suffer from insomnia.

The Arab world heard Ayatollah Khomeyni say that "Carter is trying to imitate the lion, but he is not a lion." Mr Carter has proved to be no fox either. He should perhaps have professor Brzezinski over to the Oval Office for a second reading of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, particularly the part in which he says:

"A prince being thus obliged to know well how to act as a beast must imitate the fox and the lion. For the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot defend himself from the wolves. One must, therefore, be a fox to recognize traps and a lion to frighten wolves."

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

PLO, LEBANESE, LIBYAN REACTION TO IRAN RAID CITED

LD300945 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 26 Apr 80 p 1

[Dispatch by Igor Man: "Quicksands of the Middle East"]

[Excerpts] Beirut--The news of the failed U.S. blitz reached a Beirut that has spent a sleepless night because of the state of alert: Israeli patrol boats were cruising along the Lebanese coastline. The first reactions from the man in the street were shock and concern: because of the heavy burden they have borne for years of warfare and destruction, the Lebanese are led to believe almost instinctively that any military incident in the area "will sooner or later have repercussions in Lebanon."

But let us leave aside the more than justified complexes of the Lebanese and look at the reactions. PLO spokesman Mahmud Labadi told me: "This attack is a provocation dictated by arrogance. The arrogance has been punished but will the failure of the blitz make the Americans desist from attempting further aggressions? This is the point. Obviously all our solidarity goes to the Iranian people, who will manage to repel other attacks. But what has happened gravely endangers peace. The alternatives for the Americans are either another Vietnam, if they try again, or something even worse."

I asked him for his opinion on the hostages. "I do not want to comment on the hostages' situation, especially at a moment such as this," he replied.

I encountered strict silence at the Foreign Ministry but one diplomat did tell me in confidence that the blitz "is a great misfortune, because its failure diminishes U.S. credibility also on the military plane." One Libyan source issued the following epigrammatic verdict: "A brutal aggression, but carried out to an Egyptian standard," with an obvious reference to the ill-fated Cyprus raid carried out by the Cairo paratroopers.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

PLO'S 'ARAFAT GIVES INTERVIEW TO 'LA STAMPA'

LD050959 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 1 May 80 p 3

[Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, by Igor Man: "Let Us Talk About Israel and the Red Brigades"--date not given]

[Text] Beirut--An 80-minute interview with Yasir 'Arafat is an extraordinary experience. In some respects the PLO chairman is reminiscent of Khrushchev, at least in character: Khrushchev spoke only the Russian of Ukranian peasants, whereas 'Arafat knows not only English and French but also Italian. Nevertheless, like the old Nikita, the Palestinians' supreme leader moves from indignation--whether simulated or otherwise--to calmness, from emotional feelings to invective, from oratorical emphasis to concise discourse, from what one might term a detached meticulousness to deliberate vagueness, from flashes of irony to torrential eloquence. What follows is the essence of an 80-minute conversation--from 0100 to 0220--in his spartan office somewhere in Beirut, protected by youths armed with AK-47 SS and watched over by a huge portrait of Khomeyni.

[Question] On what conditions would you Palestinians agree to negotiate with Israel at the same table? You are accused of hating the Jews, but it is also true that you have had contacts with non-Zionist Israelis in Prague and Rome, as well as with the Americans in Vienna. Perhaps this charge stems from the fact that your national council [convenzione nazionale] envisages Israel's destruction....

Irritated, 'Arafat seized the end of the question and burst out: "I am surprised and regret that even you, with your lengthy experience of the Middle East, have proved to be a victim of the lie invented a long time ago now by Mr Harkabi (former Israeli secret service chief--LA STAMPA editor's note) with this colossal lie Harkabi mounted a campaign against the Palestinians and nurtured the war against us. I regret that the West, America and Western Europe, poisoned by the enormous lie, are still being diverted from our people's tragic fate.

"How can you have forgotten that for years we have been the victims of outrages, continuous attacks and massacres? Can you have forgotten our terrible dispersion? Some 60 percent of our people are in exile and

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40 percent suffer occupation. The Palestinians have no homeland, no identity. Every day we suffer, we suffer losses claimed by the most sophisticated weapons supplied to Israel by the United States in the occupied territories in South Lebanon, where Palestinians and Lebanese die together. And after all this you come to us and repeat the lies spread by a handful of racist Israeli soldiers who have a prime minister and foreign minister wanted by the British police for terrorism. And then you come and ask us to talk with people who say 'no' to the Palestinian people, to a Palestinian state and to the PLO and who spread lies about us in complete bad faith.

"We are struggling to gain a homeland, to give a home to our women and children. Does this make us terrorists? If that is the case and if words have any meaning, then paradoxically the whole of Europe is terrorist because it combated Nazism and fascism. And the same applies to the whole of Africa which has struggled to liberate itself from colonialism. Well, if fighting for freedom and a homeland means carrying out terrorism, we can conclude that George Washington was a terrorist."

[Question] Chairman, please do not get angry. I am doing my job as a journalist: my question is not a provocative one and I will repeat it. On what conditions...

A Change

[Answer] We are looking ahead to a solution within the context of the United Nations. This is the path which we are following. But Israel refuses to implement the UN resolutions, forgetting that it owes its creation precisely to the United Nations, though by only one vote and to the detriment of the Palestinian people....

[Question] But you should not forget that the Soviets were the first to recognize the state of Israel....

[Answer] Since then we have become a people without a homeland, a people who have suffered and who are still suffering more than any other in the world. Take South Africa: there too the natives are oppressed, but at least they live on their own territory. We, on the other hand...please excuse my heated remarks, but they betray my suffering, my bitterness--above all at Europe's hesitation to shoulder its historical and moral responsibilities. Damn it: All you do is worry about Israel's security, its prosperity, and so on and so forth, but do you ever think of us, the victims?

[Question] Let us look again at the question of possible "relations" with Israel on the basis of something more specific. Let us look at the five points presented in Europe a few days ago by three Palestinian delegations. These five points were presented as a plan for resolving the Palestinian problem. I quote Khalid al-Hasan and Na'im Khadar: "1. Israel must withdraw to the borders which existed before the 1967 War; 2. The occupied zones must pass under UN control for 6-12 months; 3. The United Nations

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must organize a referendum to show what kind of government the Palestinians want; 4. If they opt for independence, a state will be established; 5. Then negotiations will be opened under UN auspices, attended by the United States, the USSR, the EEC countries and the other countries of the region, including the government of the new state (Palestine) and Israel, to discuss the refugees, the borders and other problems." These points have prompted much interest in Europe. Do you approve them? [question ends]

Though containing reservations, 'Arafat's reply was positive on the whole. This, therefore, indicates an important turning point in Palestinian policy. This was his reply: "The five points are proposals aimed at promoting an EEC initiative to resolve the principal nub of the Mideast crisis--the Palestinian problem. They were put forward by a delegation from our National Council and as a whole reflect the decisions taken by the National Council itself. They are aimed at gaining recognition of our rights: self-determination, an independent state, and so forth, within the context of the United Nations and in line with UNGA Resolutions 3236 and 3237, with the participation of the two superpowers, the United States and the USSR. We believe that the United States cannot adopt any autonomous role: it cannot and must not 'forget' the other major power, the Soviet Union.

"Now," 'Arafat continued, "we are awaiting our delegation's return for a detailed account of the various European countries' reactions. But I can already state that I consider the 24 April decision taken in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe Assembly an important step, although as far as we directly are concerned, I must add that our legitimate rights should be specified more explicitly."

[Question] So the proposals addressed to the Europe of the Nine are revised ones. But in an interview with LA STAMPA 21 March, Begin said that Europe needs Israel. He claimed that he will continue the policy of settlements. He said that there will never be a Palestinian state.

[Answer] Begin's remarks confirm what I have already said about this sinister person. But there is something I would like to add: a situation can be dominated by force--as Israel is doing--but not indefinitely. When one is moving against history, no strength is sufficient. History marches ahead in step with the just, eventually crushing the arrogant. Athens, despite its great power, did not manage to conquer Rome, but Jesus of Nazareth--a Palestinian like us--did more than that: he entered the hearts of all men of good will. We, too, are walking steadfastly with history: this is why we will prevail over the arrogance and strength of a handful of bellicose racists. We are not opposed to the Jews: our National Council has taken a historic decision, which has opened up the dialog with the non-Zionist Israelis. The dialog will continue with the Rakah (Israeli Communist Party--LA STAMPA editor's note), with men like General Peled, just to mention one prestigious name. Strength does not frighten us; we believe we are in the right; history is on our side.

[Question] If I have understood you properly, you do not hate the Jews. You say that you do not want them to disappear. Nevertheless, Israeli

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propaganda has published a summary of an interview which you granted to the Venezuelan paper EL MUNDO (11 February 1980). In that interview, you apparently said, among other things: "For us peace means the destruction of Israel." What do you say to that?

[Answer] I have the courage to defend my assertions. I have always done so. But yet again this is a shameful lie, an absurd manipulation. I challenge anyone--Israeli propaganda, the author of the so-called interview--to prove that I have ever said anything of the kind. I could not have made such an assertion because it would have conflicted with the decisions of our National Council, which we have just looked at. Damn it: We are civilized people and are proud of it--we, the victims of Israeli aggression and oppression.

[Question] Let us talk briefly about relations with Jordan. You have had a reconciliation with King Husayn. Do you intend to have closer relations with Amman?

[Answer] I was expecting this question. We are trying to carry on relations with Palestinians and Jordanians. At the Baghdad summit a joint committee was set up to gain Jordanian backing to support the Palestinians in the occupied areas. Following my meetings with King Husayn I really do hope to strengthen relations between ourselves and the Hashemite kingdom. Among other things--let this be said without rhetoric--despite past tragic situations, there is a close bond between our two peoples.

[Question] After 32 years in exile and 15 years' struggle are you looking more toward the United States, the USSR or indeed Europe to resolve your tragic situation for a people without a homeland? What do you expect from the EEC and Italy in particular?

[Answer] In our eyes the United States has lost all credibility. Carter's withdrawal following the Security Council vote was followed by the humiliating spectacle of the nomination of candidates hunting for votes from the Jewish community, obviously at our expense. I wonder where the "morality" they talk about so much is, where the famous "human rights" preached by President Carter have gone? Did he not formerly condemn the practice of settlements? Has it not proved a little too easy to forget the Vance-Gromyko joint statement of October 1977? Is it possible that mere election interests could ever divert a president who invokes the Bible from the famous "human rights?" Under such conditions, how can you trust the United States? As for the USSR, it supports our sacrosanct rights: Well then, how could we fail to consider it a power close to ourselves?

Camp David

[Answer continues] As far as Europe is concerned, we acknowledge that many steps forward have been taken. Generally by the EEC and in particular by individual European politicians. In this connection emphasis should be placed on Austrian Chancellor Kreisky's courage, the stance adopted by

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Spanish Premier Suarez and the Portuguese President. But we expect the whole of the Europe of the Nine, and Italy especially, to turn down the path taken by Kreisky, after due consideration. The Italian Government was the first to realistically demonstrate understanding toward us. Unfortunately, the Italian leaders seem to have backtracked somewhat recently. I refuse to believe that Italy is dominated by America. We have many friends in Italy and can count on the support of several political forces and on the solidarity of broad strata of your public opinion. Above all, we trust President Pertini. The constitution restricts his powers, but the charismatic strength of "Sandro," as the people call him, is such and so great that it can influence a broader political alinement in the right direction.

[Question] In connection with Italy, as you well know, a member of the Red Brigades has announced that the Red Brigades have purchased weapons from the Palestinians. He has said that Red Brigades members have been trained in Palestinian camps. The PLO Rome office has denied this. If you will permit me, I would like to ask you--who with real courage had the man responsible for the Fiumicino [Rome airport] massacre in December 1973, 'Abd al-Ghafur alias Abu Mahmud, sentenced; you who sentenced Abu Nidal; you who condemned Aldo Moro's assassination--why do you not promote a thorough investigation--as you can do--to verify whether those Red Brigades members' assertions are true or false?

[Answer] And who has told you that I have not already taken action? As soon as I heard of those statements I immediately opened a thorough investigation. Furthermore, I invited the Italian authorities to supply me with all possible details so I could get to the bottom of the matter. I am following it personally. I would like LA STAMPA, with its authoritative voice, to exert pressure on the Italian authorities, to persuade them to supply me--as far as is compatible with the secrecy covering preliminary investigations--with all the information which I am still awaiting and which will enable me to carry out a thorough investigation without fearing anyone.

I am afraid that one of the many "visitors"--they come from all over the world--might have managed to enter one of our training camps and, on the basis of casual alleged "friendships," might have tried to fabricate an apparently plausible story. Be that as it may, I repeat: Let them supply me with more information and I will act thoroughly and most decisively. I tell you, in the name of Aldo Moro, Europe's foremost defender of our rights, that anyone who has speculated on our good faith to attack democratic Italy's security and its people and most prominent men will be unmasked.

[Question] Very good. Is 26 May an important date for you?

[Answer] No. A show is being staged in the wake of Camp David, starring Carter, Begin and Al-Sadat. This "sketch" envisages the greatest possible insult to the Palestinian people, who have been so sorely tried and vexed. What is Camp David for us if not a tragedy? What kind of autonomy is being so haughtily proposed to us? The Israelis demand to control everything,

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even the water sources. Give me one example anywhere in the world of a village which does not control its own drinking water. Israel demands borders which no state has ever dreamed of demanding--defensible, historical, biblical and now even water borders.... If it were not a tragedy, it would be funny.

[Question] One final very topical question on South Lebanon, the West Bank, Afghanistan and Iran.... The danger of another war is nearer than ever. Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

[Answer] Definitely optimistic/ I am well acquainted with this geopolitical area. I know its territory and its history, this is a land which has seen prophets born, or at least pass by. It is rich in history, faith and quicksands. The sand is useful for [word indistinct], but it can also halt a war machine. This is why I say that while we can step confidently on it, for adventurist foreigners there is always the danger of sinking into the quicksand. I will add no more. A few words suffice for the intelligent.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

'STERN' INTERVIEWS PLO'S 'ARAFAT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

DW081057 Hamburg STERN in German 8 May 80 pp 286-289

[Interview with PLO Chief Yasir 'Arafat by Klaus Liedtke and Wibke Bruhns at 'Arafat's office in a Beirut hotel; interview conducted in English and partially in Arabic through an interpreter--date not given]

[Text] STERN: Mr 'Arafat, Foreign Minister Genscher is afraid that the current world crisis will even aggravate in early summer--when what is now taking shape will be certain, namely, that the talks between Al-Sadat and Begin on an autonomy for the Palestinians will fail.

'Arafat: Aggravate? I would rather say explode!

STERN: In what form?

'Arafat: We will let the actions tell their own tale. All I am saying is this: There will not be any calm in the Near and Middle East without a solution of the Palestinian problem. This man Carter! He makes so much noise over Afghanistan and suddenly rides the Islamic horses! But he forgets that this horse is tied up with one hoof to the Palestinian cause.

STERN: Does this mean that you do not support the campaign of the Islamic guerrillas in Afghanistan?

'Arafat: Suddenly you have discovered sympathy for Islam and for Afghanistan. But the Islam in occupied Jerusalem you have forgotten.

STERN: We are talking about Afghanistan at the moment. Are you on the side of the Soviets there?

'Arafat: We advocate a peaceful solution of the problems in Afghanistan. I discussed that with Bani-Sadr, with Mrs Gandhi and with an envoy of Castro. We prefer tacit diplomacy.

STERN: In Iran as well?

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'Arafat: The Iranians are my allies, my brothers. We are on their side if and when they combat the actions of the Americans. America! What kind of a "superpower" is that! What has become of it! This abortive liberation attempt--was it not a scandal?

STERN: Is not the taking of hostages the scandal in the first place?

'Arafat: You are talking about 50 American hostages. In the territories occupied by Israel we have 1.7 million Palestinian hostages.

STERN: What does the one have to do with the other? One injustice does not make the other any better.

'Arafat: Before the Americans speak about the violation of international law they ought to make it clear that they themselves do not violate it. In the south of Lebanon the Israelis, with the help of the Americans, are using internationally banned arms against us. Who is lamenting the violation of international law in that case? And is the expulsion of the Palestinians from their hamlets not a violation of international law?

STERN: Nevertheless, we would like to hear your opinion about the taking of hostages in Teheran. Do you approve of it?

'Arafat: I suggest that we talk about the hostages now who worry me most: the millions of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories.

STERN: Well enough. The European Council has underscored the right to self-determination of the Palestinians. It was promptly criticized vehemently for it by Israeli Prime Minister Begin. Yet, at the same time the European Council has called on the Palestinians to recognize Israel's right to exist. Are you prepared to do that?

'Arafat: Counterquestion: Why does the Federal Republic not recognize the PLO?

STERN: This will not be possible as long as you refuse the Israelis the right to exist.

'Arafat: You Germans have been neglecting us Palestinians for 32 years now. You are ignoring the genocide committed against us. You just talk about terrorists all the time. But you fail to see our tragedy. This is not my house in which I am sitting, this is not my home. Have you seen the camps in which my people are penned in? You Germans are not culpable for everything, because we are footing your bill, we have to suffer for what you did to the Jews. All you worry about all the time is the security of Israel, the future of Israel. And what about our future?

STERN: So, no recognition?

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'Arafat: We are not against the Jews per se. And we have already suggested two solutions to the problem. The first being a common state for Jews, Muslims and Christians. The second the establishment of a Palestinian state on every inch of soil from which the Israelis withdrew or which is liberated. You reject both possibilities. And what have you and the world had to offer us? The Camp David agreement. A self-government under Israeli supremacy which does not even grant us the right to control our water sources ourselves.

STERN: You are dodging the question about the recognition of Israel's right to exist. Yet, this remains the key to the Near East problem. If you assent to this right you will not only gain further recognition in the world but you would also relieve the Israelis of the fear that you pursue the destruction of their state.

'Arafat: I beg your pardon! Israel is the biggest military power in the Near East. All Arab states are afraid of it. How could we Palestinians destroy Israel? Should we ever get our state, then we will need at least 15 years to build up this state, to set up schools and authorities, to generate electricity, to build roads.

STERN: And what will happen after these 15 years?

'Arafat: After all, Israel has at least 10 or 15 atomic bombs. Do you really believe we could...

STERN: ...Whether you can is a different question. Do you want to?

'Arafat: Where in your question is the neutrality of the journalists? You are a victim of Israeli propaganda. I am going by the resolution of our National Congress in 1974. Under this resolution we pursue the establishment of our state on each inch of soil from which the Israelis withdraw or which we liberate. And if the Israelis withdraw even from Jericho we will hoist our flag there as well. Just look at your own constitution. You aspire to reunification which, after all, spells the dissolution of the GDR.

STERN: Wrong. We aim for reunification, but we do not want to throw the inhabitants of the GDR into the sea.

'Arafat: Who has told you that I want to throw the Israelis into the sea?

STERN: The Israeli Embassy in Bonn, for example, circulates quotations from the conference of the so-called rejection front of Arab states in Libya. They supposedly joined Al-Qadhdhafi's call to fight for the "disappearance of the Israelis from the map" and for the "return of the Zionist invaders to their countries of origin."

'Arafat: This is an incredible lie. I have not said anything like that. Here (shows excitedly some papers in Arabic). That is the result of the

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conference signed by five state chiefs (shows the signatures). Nothing like that stands there. The Israelis recently made a similar insinuation with regard to me. In an interview with the Venezuelan paper EL MUNDO, I was said to have spoken of the destruction of Israel. I have never seen a representative of that paper, nor have I ever heard of this paper. The enormous propaganda machinery of the Israelis is behind it.

STERN: This "propaganda machine" also says that a Palestinian state in this region would become a satellite of Moscow and a basis for terrorist attacks on Israel.

'Arafat: I am a friend of the Soviet Union. We are backed by the socialist states. But I am not a communist. The strongest grouping of the PLO, the Al Fatah, is not a communist organization. Of the 303 members of our National Congress only five are communists. We are proud of our democracy.

STERN: And what will happen if murderous commandos attack Israel from such a Palestinian state--maybe radical splinter groups not agreeing with a moderate course of chief of state Yasir 'Arafat?

'Arafat: What did you do to the Baader-Meinhof group?

STERN: Locked it up.

'Arafat: Well you see? Everybody who violates the law in our state will also naturally be locked up.

STERN: In the meantime, however, your terror fight against Israel continues, and every new attack on civilians, such as in Hebron, stops at least temporarily the sympathy for the fate of the Palestinians which is beginning to sprout in the whole world.

'Arafat: Hebron was a legitimate action of resistance against foreign occupiers who have confiscated the country, expelled its people and trampled upon the religious and cultural values of our people. Look at the [word indistinct] settlers of Gush-Emunim and what they are doing with our people. They want Palestinian Hebron to become a Jewish town. And what do the Israelis do to our civilians in Lebanon? But you do not like to write about the murderous attempts made against us.

STERN: So you do not consider yourself a terrorist but a resistance fighter?

'Arafat: If I am a terrorist, De Gaulle, who fought against the Germans, was also one, or George Washington who rebelled against England, or Mugabe, the new prime minister of Zimbabwe. In contrast to Begin and his foreign minister I have never killed. May I remind you of the UN resolution granting suppressed peoples the right to act with political, economic and military means against their occupiers. When the occupation has ended, all these actions will also stop.

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STERN: The UN resolution only grants the right to fight against the occupiers and not against uninvolved third parties. There have been Palestinian attacks in the whole world. Italian authorities have found out not that the kidnapers of Moro, the Red Brigades, obtained their arms from the Palestinians.

'Arafat: That is incorrect. And we have never trained an Italian either. I have asked the Italian Government for evidence.

STERN: And what about all the other assaults in the world that have been carried out by the Palestinians in the name of Palestine?

'Arafat: That is none of my business. I can be held responsible only for my sphere, for my area, for the PLO. You do not hold the Italian people responsible for the actions of the Red Brigade, or the German people for the Baader-Meinhof group, or the Spanish people for ETA.

STERN: We know that you approve only of such actions which take place within the occupied areas or within Israel. But for many people abroad it looks like an ideal, maybe even agreed on division of labor: The PLO, which is trying to achieve diplomatic recognition, is only involved in "clean" resistance fighting and the dirty terror is being done by the other Palestinian organizations.

'Arafat: This is again such an Israeli lie. One could equally well say that there is a division of labor in the Federal Republic between the government and Baader-Meinhof.

STERN: Are you asking the other Palestinian organizations to stop their international terrorism?

'Arafat: Everybody acting against the decisions of our National Council will be held responsible.

STERN: For example?

'Arafat: When Abu Nidal started his actions....

STERN: ...Occupations of embassies, the taking of hostages, assassinations in the Arabian Peninsula and Europe....

'Arafat: ...We excluded him immediately. We fight all who deviate from our line.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BENJEDID MEETING WITH BOURGUIBA EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 16 Apr 80 p 27

[Article by Souhayr Belhassen]

[Text] On his first "excursion" into the Arab world, President Chadli Benjedid made a good job of it. Between 23 March and 3 April, he paid official visits to 12 countries\*. Wherever he went, he advocated "the assembling of the Arabs and the development of good neighbor relations." Coming from a chief of state whose country is in a state of war with its neighbor to the west, that seems to be a contradiction. All the more of a contradiction because Gafsa was as much an Algerian-Tunisian affair as it was a Tunisian-Libyan affair.

With Riyadh and Tunis, the Algerian president spoke about "the value Algeria places on the stability of neighboring regimes." For the Saudis, who are supporting Morocco in the Sahara affair, the attitude of President Chadli has to be taken seriously. The same is true of the Tunisians. With this difference, however, that as regards Tunisia the statement of intent by the Algerian chief of state was a response. A response to the desire on the part of the Tunisian authorities to exonerate the Algerians in the Gafsa affair, in order, as they have always maintained, "to keep Tunisia from having to fight on two fronts." However, the erasing of an affair such as that of Gafsa in the period of 1 hour is fatally sweeping the actual problems under the rug. These problems merit real working sessions.

Was that the reason President Bourguiba invited his guest to spend 24 hours in Tunisia? The fact of the matter is that he immediately went to the heart of the matter. "It is said that you do not care too much for us?" That was the question he thrust at Mohamed Yahiaoui when the strong man of the FLN was introduced to him. "I am the dean of the chiefs of state whom you have visited," he told Chadli. "You should have started with me." Bourguiba concealed even less his ill-humor which he had taken great pains

\*Successively: Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, North Yeman, South Yeman, Qatar, Bahrein, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Libya and Tunisia

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to contain since Gafsa. Chadli gave his word as a man and an officer that we was not up to date on what was being hatched (in his country) against Tunisia and renewed his assurance that Tunisia will not have problems with Algeria.

It is known that in Tunis the Gafsa affair continues to cause stirrings in the high Algerian political sectors. It is also known that the cards will be dealt again. Thus, it seems that President Chadli decided to get rid of a certain number of minor officials involved in the affair and to draw closer other highly placed officials to neutralize them, such as Slimane Hoffman, head of the GLN's foreign affairs section, who was moreover a member of the official delegation to Tunis.

While Bourguiba returned to the question of Gafsa, members of the government took care to bypass it and speak of bilateral cooperation. The Algerian side said that it was ready to reactivate such cooperation. President Chadli even positioned himself as a mediator between Bourguiba and Qadhdhafi by bringing the former fraternal and respectful greetings from the latter. "If what you say is true, how do you explain Gafsa?" Bourguiba asked.

Although there is still a chill between Tunisia and Libya, for Algeria it is a time for accolades; and one can only be pleased at this. However, the Gafsa attack produced 48 dead and 100 wounded; and 15 commandos were sentenced to death. Although Tunisians could not be spared such an ordeal, they have a right to know who was involved in the Gafsa coup and why.

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ACTIVITY OF 'RADIO-GAFSA LIBRE' REPORTED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 12 Mar 80 pp 24-25

[Text] Tunisia-Libya. Transmitting from Libyan territory, "Free Radio Gafsa" batters the Tunisian population with imaginary news. Radio delirium. From our correspondent in Tunis, Souhayr Belhassen.

"50-3--From Majed to Choab...They are waiting for you at Bardo. Do not blow up La Goulette" (port of Tunis). "30-6--Salem--Salem...The grasshoppers are everywhere. Stay where you are...." These mysterious messages transmitted by "Free Radio Gafsa" which broadcasts on medium waves are immensely successful in Tunisia. Static jamming the broadcast? Just by turning the knob you can again pick up: "This is Radio Gafsa, the voice of the revolutionary movement for freeing Tunisia." "The Will to Live," a patriotic song by the Tunisian poet, Abou el-Kacem Chebbi, sung by the Tunisian woman, Oulaya, is used as the call-sign for three daily broadcasts: 0700 to 0900, 1400 to 1700 and 1900 to 2300.

"Free Radio Gafsa"

Saturday, 23 February, 0700: the "Calls to the workers" are starting. First the farmers who "are heading towards their hard labor while the revellers who oppress them and suck their blood are just now ending their drinking bouts and orgies...." There follows a tirade about the alliance between "the upper middle class and the feudalists," in league with each other to dispossess the small farmer, forced to sell to the big farmer to pay back loans from the bank. And so the workers are exploited by bosses "who have bank accounts in Switzerland," while their union rights are disregarded by a "puppet UGTT (Tunisian General Workers' Union)." Lastly "The Young People's Broadcast" criticizes Tunisian education policy which "overlooks the Arab-Moslem values, the political and union liberties of students subjected to selection and oppression."

At the end of each broadcast there is a call for which the call-sign is the salute to the Tunisian flag: "This is the voice of the people, it is our revolution. Stay with us until total liberation. Citizens, attack police stations, the national guard, the military barracks. Rise up against oppression, injustice, humiliations."

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At 1400, the news. Example: "A lieutenant from the Tunisian Army has joined the ranks of the revolution. The fate of higher-ranking Tunisian officers will be no better than that of the shah." Thus with messages coded in ramors, mingling an ounce of truth with immense delirium, "Free Radio Gafsa" sews disorder in people's minds, even though its excesses cause laughter. Even though it is known for a certainty that French airplanes and American marines are neither streaking across Tunisia's skies nor overrunning the streets of the capital. How can it be ascertained that such and such a leader does not possess the holdings that an announcer with a Tunisian accent says he does?

## Triumphalist News

"Free Radio Gafsa" started its broadcasting on 6 February, i.e. 10 days after the beginning of the attack on Gafsa. According to information from reliable sources, this pirate radio station is no other than...Radio Tripoli, and no matter what it says, broadcasts from Libyan territory. This is not the first feat of this kind carried out by Radio Tripoli. Thus it was that following the abortive coup of 16 August 1972 against King Hassan II a broadcast entitled "The Voice of the Liberation" with Moroccan speakers was broadcast from Libyan territory to Morocco.

As for Tunisia, after the attack on Gafsa and throughout the days that followed, Radio Tripoli went on trumpeting chiefly imaginary and always triumphalist "news." Samples provide evidence: "Tunisian power is on its last legs, it is going to fall in a matter of a few hours or a few days. The Tunisian liberation army, having hemmed in Gafsa, Sfax, Gabes and other cities, is advancing on a besieged Tunis.--The sold-out power has found no help except from the French paratroopers and the marines of the American Sixth Fleet. But, this power has already been dropped by its own soldiers and policemen who, to a man, have abandoned a decayed regime to join forces with the liberation army. The policemen have taken refuge in the mountains. Resistance is getting organized, and Tunisia, within the next few days, is going to become yet another new tomb of imperialism...."

## For a Faithful Listener

After the birth of "Free Radio Gafsa," which was supposed to put more truth into these Libyan lucubrations there was no noticeable let-up in Radio Tripoli's whackings. Sunday 24 February, for example, the news transmitted at 2115 repeated: "Altercations between the Tunisian people and French soldiers are still going on in the south of Tunisia." That occurred nearly a month after the cessation of fighting in Gafsa, and when French airplanes and helicopters had left Tunisia 2 weeks previously. Detail work is not for Libyan media. The official press agency, JANA, is still launching appeals for a revolt in Tunisia, termed a "French protectorate." And all this is not just the whim of some intellectual whipper-snappers. Next to the army, the media, especially Radio Tripoli, are the power instrument on which Qadhafi keeps the closest tab. He never goes anywhere without his transistor. "He is the

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most faithful listener to the news broadcasts," is what everybody in Tripoli avows. If the colonel is all that assiduous, it is to make sure that his instructions are well carried out. The director general of radio-television, Mr Dhaw el-Humeid, is a lackluster civil servant. He receives his orders directly from the "top command," that is from Qadhdhafi's closest associates.

Furthermore, Radio Tripoli is one of the few carefully guarded government buildings, or rather it is a radio barracks which likewise houses the JANA agency. An army detachment is garrisoned there. Machine guns on the roofs. Systematic personnel checks at all entrances and exits, searches....

Unsuccessful

The model is Egyptian radio as it was in Nasir's days: an appeal to "unionist" feelings uttered by a vibrant voice. Moreover, up to 1977 most of the announcers were Egyptians. But one day Colonel Qadhdhafi convened what few Libyan journalists there were to cast this astonishing reproach at them: "Your news is made by Arabs." And so a clean sweep occurs. From that point on in radio as in other communications media the only people left are Libyans. The few "Arabs" remaining on duty are used in certain campaigns carried out through "The Voice of the Arab Party." That is the name that Radio Tripoli assumes every day after 2100, with a program whose ambition is to replace "The Voice of the Arabs" which broadcasts from Cairo, but has lost much of its impact since Nasir's disappearance. In spite of that, adhdhafi has had little success. And for good reason.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OFFICIAL PREVIEWS UPCOMING SESSION

LD281225 London THE TIMES in English 28 Apr 80 p 6

[Report by Edward Mortimer on an interview with Babib Chatti, secretary-general of the Islamic conference in Jiddah on 27 April 1980]

[Text] Proposals for a solution to the Afghanistan crisis, based on the country's guaranteed neutrality, will be discussed at next month's conference of Islamic foreign ministers in Islamabad. They may lead to a joint approach by the Muslim states to the United States and the Soviet Union.

Mr Habib Chatti, secretary-general of the organization of the Islamic conference, told me at his headquarters in Jiddah that Afghanistan would again be the leading item on the agenda at next month's meeting. Last January an extraordinary session of the conference condemned the Soviet intervention.

This time all Muslim states will be represented, including Syria and South Yemen which boycotted the last one, and there will certainly be a tussle between "hard" and "soft" liners.

But Mr Chatti hoped a compromise would emerge based on the neutrality of Afghanistan, to be guaranteed by Afghanistan itself in a treaty with both the superpowers and with its neighbours--Pakistan, Iran and China--all of which would commit themselves to respect its neutrality and independence.

Mr Chatti agreed that this proposal presupposed a settlement of Afghanistan's internal conflict and the existence of the Afghan Government with broad national support--probably a government of national unity comprising elements both from the present Soviet-backed regime and from the Muslim Mujahidin fighting against it.

He believed a national reconciliation could be achieved if both the United States and the Soviet Union would commit themselves to support such a solution in principle.

Mr Chatti expressed grave concern about the Iranian crisis and condemned the American attempt to rescue the hostages by force. He said such actions were not in the interests of the United States or the West because they were enabling the Soviet Union to pose as the supporter of Muslim states.

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AFGHANISTAN

POISON GAS: 'ABSOLUTE WEAPON' REPORTEDLY USED BY SOVIET TROOPS

Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 24 Mar 80 p 34

[Article by Pierre de Villemarest]

[Text] The Konar Valley in Afghanistan has been "mopped up" by the Russians using chemical warfare. This is one of the main pockets of Moslem resistance in the eastern part of the country. To capture this region, the Soviets have resorted to napalm bombings and to spreading delayed-action gas, with the result that 30,000 people have been killed and that 130,000 refugees have migrated to Pakistan.

Chemical warfare--outlawed by treaties signed just after the first world war and by a 1975 convention--is reported to have already been used in 1978 and 1979 against Lao and Kampuchean resistance fighters. According to NATO services, the Soviets are believed to have decided in 1965 to include this type of weaponry in their inventory and to have created a special command force in 1970, which is presently commanded by General Pikolov.

After the Yom Kippur War in 1973, it was noted that Soviet-made tanks captured from the Arab armies by the Israelis were equipped with an "anti-CBN" system, i.e., protecting against the effects of chemical, bacteriological and nuclear warfare. In 1979, the Soviet stockpile of chemical-type weaponry was estimated to be about 400,000 metric tons, and the personnel trained to handle it at 100,000 men.

Designed to be shot into enemy lines by shells or missiles or to be spread by plane or helicopter, sometimes colorless and sometimes colored, the Soviet gases can be basically classified as a half dozen or so different types: soman (GD) and tabun (GA), sarin, VR-55, phosgene and hydrogen cyanide (HCN).

According to their type they attack the nervous or circulatory system, the respiratory pathways, or the organs of sight. Some gases kill in 10 minutes, while others act only after several hours.

The gas used in the Khunar Valley works by "impregnation," that is, when it is spread at cold temperatures (less than 10-15 degrees centigrade) it sticks to clothing and to shoes without reaching the body directly. But as soon as

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the atmosphere warms up, or when the person wearing the contaminated clothing gets close to a fire or enters a dwelling, the gas "wakes up." It is supposed that the Soviets will take advantage of the daily warming trend in the spring to wipe out a considerable part of the Afghan resistance in this manner.

The Red Army is equipped to occupy territory which has been hit by chemical warfare. Certain combat groups, using masks and chemical-resistant suits, can go in immediately after the attack. Light vehicles are assigned to cordon off the contaminated areas.

A third class of combatants then starts the decontamination process: TMS 65 devices are capable of "washing" tanks or trucks; the ARS 12 U and the ARS 14 can treat heavy tanks as well as artillery pieces. These weapons are mounted on Zil 131 carriages, which are completely Soviet-made, but have depended on Western technological assistance for their own development, especially since 1972.

According to NATO, a third of Soviet missiles and rockets are furnished with chemical payloads. Half of these amounts are assigned to the Western front, meaning Europe. The East German army is also thought to be equipped and trained for chemical warfare, if one may believe a study carried out in 1979 by a British expert, Professor John Erickson.

Although the NATO high command has issued several warnings against the Russian military "investment" in chemical weaponry (a report on this topic was published in January, 1980), the extent of preparation in the West is very weak. American army units assigned to study problems of chemical warfare comprise only about 2,000 men.

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AFGHANISTAN

AFGHANISTAN POLITICAL SITUATION AFTER SOVIET INVASION REVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 May 80 pp 38-39

[Article by Badr al-Hajj: "Amin Beheaded Singer Who Fell in Love with His Daughter; U.S. Correspondents Move Around with Chador; Gen Rabi' Leads Holy War; Soviets and Karmal Exaggerate Amin's Responsibility for Massacres"]

[Text] Before Badr al-Hajj, the correspondent for AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI left Afghanistan, he sent various other reports about the situation in the Moslem country that has been occupied by the Soviets. He also sent political interviews. A report about the political situation after the foreign invasion follows.

In Kabul one wakes up to the roar of the engines of military airplanes taking off from the nearby airport almost every five minutes. No one can recognize the truth about what is taking place. The news that is disseminated from foreign broadcasts comes from press and broadcast agency correspondents who are staying at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. Those correspondents receive their information from some taxicab drivers or from some merchants or workers in the hotel.

The orders were clear on the day following my arrival. An official statement directed to correspondents was posted at the entrance to the hotel. The substance of this statement was that taking pictures was forbidden without special permission. [To take a picture one had to have] a card signed by the Ministry of Interior and the director of the Security Division of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The measures [one goes through] to obtain this card require several days.

Why was this decision made? When one asks the employees at the Information Center at the Ministry of Information and Culture, they say that a U.S. correspondent wore a chador and sat beside an Afghan taxicab driver. At every barricade the driver would claim that the person sitting beside him was his wife. This continued until a Soviet patrol discovered the matter: it confiscated the films and expelled the correspondent. A decision was made to prevent foreign correspondents from leaving the city of Kabul without prior official permission.

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When one asks where the Soviet soldiers are, the response is that they rarely roam around. Security in the city falls under the jurisdiction of Afghan forces. But one notices in some sensitive areas the presence of Soviet troop carriers and some Soviet soldiers with their woolen hats, the cossacks, bearing the communist insignia. They carry Kalashnikov guns and sit on the sidewalks.

The only news about the fighting appears in the English newspaper, the KABUL NEW TIMES. It features a daily article about the activities of the new government and the conspiracies against Afghanistan. After a few days it becomes evident to one that all the partisans are focusing in their arguments on the crimes of former president Hafizullah Amin and on the fact that the current stage in Afghanistan was the stage of the Democratic National Revolution and not that of the Socialist Revolution. All leftist slogans were therefore removed from [public] squares and government departments. The new Afghan president asked that the matter of changing the shape and color of the current red flag be looked into. It seems that the purpose of this activity is to contain the rancor and the campaign against the communists in this country whose people are characterized by preserving their strong religious feeling.

#### Periodic Slogans

The new regime whose leaders assumed power on the 27th of last December proposed new slogans that differ from those which were proposed in the past by presidents Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin. During the period of his rule Nur Muhammad Taraki proposed the slogan, "Protection, Law, Justice." When Hafizullah overthrew Nur Muhammad Taraki, he proposed a new slogan: "Food, Clothing, Shelter." The current regime, however, has proposed three slogans. They are:

- \* Establishing a national front to protect the homeland.
- \* [Initiating] a dialogue with the opposition forces to solve the crisis.
- \* Changing the color and the shape of the flag and holding a referendum for the people on that matter.

The question now is this: What has been achieved from these slogans, and what are the difficulties that are facing the new regime?

It must be recognized that the presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan is not in fact an indication of power for the Soviets or for the rulers in Kabul. Afghans consider these forces to be foreign forces who are occupying their land.

The evidence for this lies in the strikes and tumultuous demonstrations that took place in the cities of Kandahar and Kabul. These strikes and demonstrations forced Afghan and Soviet forces to interfere and to quell the demonstrators by force.

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Although it has been claimed that U.S. and Pakistani intelligence agents were arrested, it is difficult to believe that 2 or 10 agents can persuade tens of thousands of Afghans to go out into the streets and demonstrate. What is accepted by everyone who visits Afghanistan is the fact that there is a popular climate against Soviet presence in Afghanistan. There are numerous stories to confirm this. News is spreading in Kabul about sniper operations against the Soviets in the middle of the capital. Afghans resorted to another method also: any blond person who is suspected of being a Soviet citizen is stabbed to death.

There is still news in the Afghan capital about the massacre that took place near the city of Herat last March when about 2,000 soldiers in the Afghan army rebelled and murdered Soviet experts and Afghan party officers. The Soviets responded to this with a concentrated land and air attack in which MIG's and helicopters were used. It is being said that about 20,000 persons were killed as a result of that campaign.

Did the Soviets Summon Themselves?

But who summoned the Soviet Union to enter into Afghanistan with such concentration? It has been proven that it would be absolutely inconceivable for Hafizullah Amin to have summoned these forces to overthrow him, especially since Amin's relations with the Soviets were very poor. But if Babrak Karmal was the one who had summoned the Soviets, it has also been proven that Karmal had no official government function. Whether Karmal was in Afghanistan on the day Soviet troops entered the country or whether he was a political refugee in Eastern Europe, the legal authority that summoned the Soviets remain unknown. It is most likely that the Soviets summoned themselves to interfere after they noticed that the situation was deteriorating and the position of the regime that was friendly to them was precarious.

Regardless of the legality or illegality of the Soviet presence, the new government is still facing difficulties in establishing a national front to protect the homeland. The nature of the relations between the Parcham faction or the al-Rayah ruling faction and the supporters of the late President Nur Muhammad Taraki is not yet known. It is also not yet known whether there is in fact an agreement between the Khalq faction and the Parcham faction. Numerous circles are saying that there are disputes within the ranks of the present government.

On the other hand, it seems that the negotiations that are taking place to form a national front with the group of Muhammad Tahir Badakhshi are still in an early stage. An agreement between the two groups has not yet emerged.

It is known that Muhammad Tahir Badakhshi heads the Organization for the Oppressed Freedom Fighters and Tollers of Afghanistan. He was a member of the Democratic People's Party, and then he broke away when the party participated in the cabinet that was formed by Muhammad Daud following

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the overthrow of King Muhammad Zahir Shah in 1973. He led armed groups that were active in the Province of Badakhshan near the northern borders of Afghanistan. Badakhshi attacked the policy of the Soviet Union and of the People's Republic of China at the same time.

But there remains a question that needs full explanation: it is the question of Hafizullah Amin. Was Hafizullah Amin as ugly and as brutal as the official media portrayed him or not? The communists are especially known for exaggerating their portrayals of "their enemies" or of those whom they had "purged" from their ranks.

What is the reason for this daily hysterical campaign against Amin even though about 3 months have passed since his death?

There may be several reasons for this. Chief among those is that of holding Amin responsible for the crimes that have been committed. But it also seems that some Afghan officers are still loyal to Amin. Amin was very popular at least among the armed forces, and it is also evident that he was the regime's strong man even in the early days of Taraki's administration.

Hafizullah Amin was directly responsible for the military organization in the Khalq faction. He also assumed the very sensitive position of educating the armed forces during the rule of Muhammad Daud. Hence, there was strong support for Hafizullah Amin in the army. This support grew after Amin assumed power and issued orders to double the salaries of soldiers and officers so that everyone would gain.

In spite of Amin's success in gradually removing his enemies and adversaries from government, he derived his power basically from the officers of the air force who nominated him for the presidency instead of Nur Muhammad Taraki after the coup of 27 April 1978.

But last September while he was in power, he was not able to preserve the regime. Confidential sources of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI have revealed that three attempts against Amin were aborted during his shortlived regime. The fourth attempt succeeded on 26 December for internal reasons and due to the Soviet intervention.

On a personal level the ruling party lost a great leader and a revolutionary torch after the death of Nur Muhammad Taraki. This affected the condition of the party which had originally been unstable. Hafizullah Amin tried to avoid this instability by launching a campaign of arrests and liquidations within the ranks of the party. He sought the assistance of members of his family, and this led the Parcham [faction] and various other opposition members to accuse the regime of nepotism.

Major errors were committed on the ideological level in the process of distributing land and in the process of agrarian reform. There were also major errors committed against the clergy during the war. All these errors, in addition to the purge campaigns that were conducted in the ranks

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of the party and the army, led to a clustering of numerous forces against Hafizullah Amin.

#### Wait for Spring

It is certain that Afghanistan has now entered into a stage that is more bloody than the previous one. It is true that the Soviets, whose forces now number about 100,000 did choose a time that was suitable for their military intervention when the snow was covering large areas of Afghanistan and making it impossible for the opposing forces to work effectively against theirs; but it is nevertheless expected that Afghanistan will experience next spring, and specifically in April and May, violent fighting between the Islamic and the Maoist forces on the one hand and the Afghan and Soviet forces on the other. Everybody in Kabul is saying, wait till spring. Foreign embassies have ordered their subjects as of now to leave Afghanistan.

It is evident from my tours in the cities of Kandahar, Jalalabad and Herat that battles in the real sense of the word are actually nonexistent. There were only limited military operations against military vehicles. Moslem insurgents resorted to setting up mobile barricades to trap military men. Other groups blew up bridges to cut supplies from the military centers. Three bridges were blown up, for example, in the area of the (Salanj) Passes where the hilly nature of the terrain makes commando-style military operations possible.

Today, the two sides are preparing for the next round in the spring. The Soviets have been quick to move their units to the confrontation points with Pakistan. In the city of Kandahar I was told that hundreds of Soviet tanks had left the city to Spin Baldak Point on the Pakistani borders. It seems that the objective of taking up this position is to make preparations for closing the borders to infiltrators permanently.

The Soviets rely heavily on large armored helicopters which can carry 64 missiles. They use these helicopters to patrol principal roads, mountain passes and the valleys. Not a day did go by while we were in Kabul without seeing squadrons of these airplanes taking off from Kabul Airport in regular sorties.

On the other hand, the Moslem insurgents also have some military advantages. Afghan territory, and especially the areas on the Pakistani-Afghan borders, is mountainous, rugged and ideal for guerilla warfare.

Moslem insurgents are saying, "We threw out numerous forces that occupied our country, and we will also throw out the Soviets." On the other hand, there is fear that if the Soviet forces were to be subjected to strong strikes, they would resort to chemical warfare and to bombarding vast areas of Afghanistan, thereby forcing the tribes to move to Pakistan. This would cause disputes to arise in the Pakistani area where the Pashtu tribes also reside.

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Observers here do not think it unlikely that the Soviets would bombard the Pakistani areas and the training bases where Afghans receive their training if the noose around Soviet troops is tightened. This would be consistent with the method used by the United States when it bombarded North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. This in turn would create international complications that no one would know how to deal with.

The fact is that matters now in Afghanistan have reached a point where neither party will retreat one inch from its position. The Soviets will not withdraw unless, as they say, "the foreign aggression from Pakistan, China and the United States," ceases. The Afghan government is weak and submissive to the Soviets. It is not capable of disputing its position with the Islamic and Maoist forces. At the same time the Islamic forces have announced "a holy war against the communist infidels."

This is how Afghanistan is living the war. In Kandahar, which can only be reached by convoys protected by tanks, one reads slogans in Pashtu such as, "What are you doing here, sons of Lenin?" and "Wake up, you Moslems!" The case is the same in Jalalabad, the city that is located on the principal road between Kabul and the Pakistani city of Peshawar. Jalalabad is a quiet and ordinary city in the day time. Occasionally, however, one hears the sounds of explosions and time bombs, and at night one hears the sounds of gunfire in the distant hills. When the shopkeepers try to strike to comply with the call of the Moslem insurgents, the Afghan army threatens to confiscate every shop that closes its doors.

#### When Kabul Staged Demonstrations

When Kabul staged strikes and demonstrations, the Soviets bombarded the demonstrators and their sections with their helicopters. It is being said that the dead, the wounded and the missing are estimated to be in the hundreds.

In Afghan cities the life of every person with European features is in danger. The ambassador of West Germany in Kabul told me, "The insurgents used to discriminate and to ask about identities. But now it seems that the war has assumed the character of universal destruction. A German correspondent was murdered even though he had the German flag on his car. We have, therefore, asked all our subjects to leave immediately."

Afghanistan remains at the forefront of events. The Soviets are considering their moves, and the West is considering its moves. Afghanistan, however, has become the victim of these considerations. As far as the Soviets are concerned, it seems that their choices were very limited: either the existing regime would fall and a regime hostile to the Soviets would be established on their border, and the implications of that were dangerous; or the Soviets can set up a government in Afghanistan that supports them and [thus] move the confrontation to the borders of Afghanistan with Iran, Pakistan and China.

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BEIJING-ORIENTED COMMUNIST LEADER TAMIM INTERVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 Mar 80 pp 40-41

[Interview with Afghan Communist Party Leader, Tamim, by Badr al-Hajj: "Interview with the Beijing 'Hawks' on al-Dajaj [Chickens] Street; Maoists Say, 'We Will Take Advantage of Conflict Between Government and Moslem Insurgents To Improve Our Military Condition and Condition of Our Party'"]

[Text] Tamim, one of the leaders of the Afghan Communist Party which is loyal to Beijing told Badr al-Hajj that there was no conflict between the Maoists and the Moslem insurgents, but that the fundamental conflict was with the Soviets and that it was centered around the existence or non-existence of Afghanistan.

On the basis of a previously scheduled appointment with Tamim I went to al-Dajaj Street, well-known as the place where Afghan furs and carpets are sold. In one of the stores I met Ahmad, one of Tamim's assistants. I walked with him for a long distance. We entered into alleys and narrow streets in the middle of the capital, and Comrade Ahmad spoke only once and said: "Follow me!"

After we had walked for about 10 minutes, Ahmad told me, "Wait here for a while." He went into one of the alleys, and after a few minutes which seemed to be to be long hours, he returned and said, "Comrade Tamim is waiting for you. You can go in now."

Ahmad and I entered into a humble home. There was a heater in one of the rooms, and near it was a fair amount of black stones. Tamim welcomed me and said, "This is soft coal which we use for heating and cooking in the winter."

[Question] What is your analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan and why did matters deteriorate to the point that pushed Afghanistan towards a civil war?

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[Answer] We cannot analyze the current situation without referring to 1973 when Muhammad Dawud overthrew the royal regime in Afghanistan. Everyone knew that Dawud was the Soviet's chief man in Afghanistan.

During the 5 years of Daud's regime Afghanistan was a free market for western and Soviet exploitation. The Soviets were and still are plundering [our] natural gas, food products, wool and cement. They have been exporting weapons and military equipment to us, but they do nothing to build a single factory.

On the other hand, western imperialist forces have been importing food and agricultural products, and they have been exporting to us consumer goods through their feudalist and bourgeois agents.

At the same time the rate of unemployment was growing in a dangerous way, and production was declining to the point that tens of thousands of Afghans felt compelled to immigrate to the countries of the Gulf and to Iran [in search of] employment. The number of Afghans who immigrated to work abroad between 1975 and 1977 is about 3 million.

[Question] What is your theoretical analysis of the split that took place in the Democratic People's Party [and produced] the faction of Khalq and Parcham, and why didn't the unity of the two factions continue after the 78 coup inspite of the Russians' efforts?

[Answer] Theoretically speaking, we are convinced that the communist groups which work under the umbrella of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan or in the Middle East are groups that do not rely on the masses as much as they rely on Soviet support. The Afghan Democratic People's Party is an opportunist party that participated in the government during the days of Daud. When [its members] saw that the ship was drowning, they abandoned ship and joined the opposition.

The dispute between the two factions of this party is not ideological at all because both factions receive their instructions from the Soviets. The dispute is confined to this question: who is to assume the leadership and the positions in the political bureau and the Central Committee?

It is amusing that the political correspondence between these two parties contains blunt accusations they make against each other. They accuse each other of having had relations with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, and they are still accusing each other of this.

Maoists Exonerate Amin

[Question] But there are those who are affirming today that Hafizullah Amin was a U.S. intelligence agent?!

[Answer] There is no basis of truth to that statement. We know quite well that the Soviets supported Hafizullah Amin and undermined Parcham

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so as to establish the Soviet line firmly not only in Afghanistan, but also in the entire area. Hafizullah Amin is not the only one responsible for the liquidation of the Parcham elements because the Soviets took part in this operation. During the 18 months of the Taraki-Amin regime, the Soviets supported this regime 100 percent.

[Question] Why then did the Soviets support Babrak Karmal as long as Amin was supporting Soviet policy?

[Answer] What applied to Muhammad Daud applied to Hafizullah Amin. When Amin completed his mission with failure, the Soviets decided to replace him with another figure.

[Question] Karmal's regime is advocating the establishment of a national front. Are you prepared to cooperate with him and to turn a new leaf?

[Answer] This regime is totally unrelated to our people. It came [to power] through the agency of Soviet guns and tanks, and it will not succeed in establishing a national front because the entire nation with all its groups is against it.

We have an ideological difference with the Moslem groups, but the difference we have with the Soviets is a question of existence or nonexistence.

We have an understanding with the Islamic groups about the need for fighting the Soviets. The principal conflict during the present stage, as we see it, lies with the Soviet Union, and the only way this conflict can be resolved is by force. But the conflict with the Islamic groups is secondary and can be resolved through dialogue. Our comrades in the provinces have been in fact fighting side by side with the Moslem groups that are opposing the Soviets. There is no difference between us on this subject.

I must call attention here to an important matter which the Soviets are trying to cover up. There is strong opposition from the group of Hafizullah Amin which is led by 'Arif 'Alim Yar. He is assisted by one of the leaders of the commando units in the army. This group has excellent weapons. And there is also a rebellion in the area of Paghman, which is where Hafizullah Amin was born.

A Marxist-Leninist Front

[Question] What do you think should be done with regard to the opposition forces?

[Answer] Preliminary statistics indicate that about 500,000 Afghans were killed as a result of air and artillery bombardment. In approximately 20 months more than 3 million animals were destroyed, and about 50,000 persons were executed. There are also about half a million refugees in Pakistan and Iran. It is the Soviets and their group who are responsible for this situation.

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To those who are saying that the prisons in Afghanistan have become empty after Karmal came to power, we say that there are approximately 5,000 political prisoners in the central prison of Kabul alone. Most of those prisoners are from the progressive, democratic and Islamic forces. They are professional physicians, teachers and engineers.

We strongly advocate the unity of the progressive opposition forces. The Islamic opposition forces proclaimed their unity weeks ago, and now we have to face up to this new situation by establishing a Marxist-Leninist front that would include all the groups on the scene. This is the focus of our efforts at this stage.

[Question] What is your opinion of the political implications of the Soviet invasion on the area as a whole?

[Answer] As far as the Arab area is concerned, it is our opinion that the Soviet invasion has given the al-Sadat-Begin alliance an historical opportunity to intensify its attack on the Arab forces that are opposing the settlement.

The Soviet occupation of our country is also giving imperialism the opportunity to talk about the security of the Gulf and to strengthen the military bases in this area.

[Question] What is the military situation now? What have the Soviets done on the military scene after they entered into Afghanistan?

[Answer] From a military standpoint we admit that military operations against the occupation forces are not as heavy as they should be. This is the case for various reasons primarily because this is the winter season and the piled-up snow on the mountain prevents the easy movement of the fighters. We are, therefore, taking advantage of the present situation and organizing cells in all the areas so we can take action next spring.

The only thing that the Soviet army did after it entered into Afghanistan was to occupy the major cities and ensure travel between these cities and the capital. This has so far cost the Soviets at least 3,500 soldiers. It has become evident to us that the Soviet forces cannot fight in the mountainous areas and that the forces of the Afghan army can fight there better. The Soviets so far have not been able to enter the mountainous areas in the northeast, in the central region and in the eastern region with their tanks. Therefore, all of these areas are not yet under their control.

We have destroyed Soviet tanks. The Soviets run away and leave their weapons behind. The Afghan people have so far seized about 5,000 pieces of weapons, and we coined the well known anecdote, "We have become masters of the Kalashnikov."

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Provisional Islamic Government

[Question] What about the future of Afghanistan?

[Answer] The war will be a long one, but we will ultimately throw the invaders out of our land. Our information affirms that the Islamic forces will assume power sooner or later. We have to prepare ourselves for the next stage, that is, the stage that will follow the defeat of the Soviets.

The Islamic forces are now allied, and they are insisting that they are the sole legitimate representative of the people of Afghanistan. It seems that in the next stage the Islamic forces will be focusing on liberating the southeastern provinces where military bases and a provisional government will be set up. This provisional government may be recognized by some Islamic countries.

We have no choice in a situation such as this but to take advantage of the existing conflict between the Soviets and the government, on the one hand, and the Islamic forces on the other, so that we can strengthen our military position and our organizational structure and become capable of facing all possibilities.

[Question] What about China's position vis a vis all these conditions? Do you approve of China providing arms to the Islamic forces?

[Answer] China is a friendly country that has no ambitions in our country. The Chinese did not interfere in Afghanistan the way the Soviets did. As far as providing arms to the Islamic forces is concerned, we differ with China on some of its foreign policy positions. This does not mean, however, that we oppose China. Our position is clear: to fight red imperialism, the enemy of nations. We must cooperate with the devil in order to achieve that.

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FOREIGN MINISTER SHAH MUHAMMAD DOST INTERVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 Mar 80 p 41

[Interview with Shah Muhammad Dost by Badr al-Hajj: "The Government Is Prepared To Solve the Problem by Peaceful Means"]

[Text] At the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul I met with Mr Shah Muhammad Dost, Afghan minister of foreign affairs and member of the Central Committee of the Afghan Democratic People's Party.

Mr Dost had held the position of political adviser at the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the administration of former Afghan President Hafizullah Amin. But after Amin was overthrown, Mr Dost, who speaks English fluently, assumed the position of minister of foreign affairs. He represented his country at the emergency session of the U.N. Security Council that was held in February to look into the question of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan.

The text of the press interview follows:

[Question] What is your analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan, and how do you evaluate your relations with Pakistan and with the Arab countries now that new factors have come into the area following the overthrow of the regime of Hafizullah Amin?

[Answer] Unfortunately there are some reactionary countries in the Middle East who are now siding with other reactionaries in the world and principally U.S. imperialism, against our revolution. By comparison, we are seeing that the Palestinian people and their revolution are also facing the same enemies.

But first and foremost, I must say this openly: a revolution in Afghanistan was inevitable so that social progress [can be achieved].

As time went by, however, deviations from the party's basic political course began to emerge. These deviations have not become so serious that had we not undertaken to reform this matter, these deviations would have led to the fragmentation of the country.

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The country experienced a dangerous period during Amin's regime, and inhuman actions and crimes against ordinary citizens from various sectors were committed.

It was necessary to correct the party's political course, and this is what actually happened on the 27th of December when the revolution in Afghanistan entered into a new stage. A new leadership also came into power. Comrade Babrak Karmal assumed the position of chairman of the Revolutionary Council and prime minister, and a new government was established.

The step that we undertook complemented the revolution of April 1978. This is because many of the people who had participated in the April Revolution--and this includes those from the party, from the government or from the Revolutionary Council--were the ones who corrected the course of the revolution. It is for this reason that we called upon all the patriotic fighters to work and to establish a national front. We called upon all the qualified people and all those who mean well to serve the people.

[Question] Charges have been made that you are harassing Moslem theologians!

[Answer] The declarations and the statements that we made on numerous occasions after the new leadership assumed power indicate that our citizens have every right to practice their religious rights freely. I assure [you], therefore, that this subject does not constitute an issue with us. Islam never was and never will be an issue of conflict with us in Afghanistan.

[Question] Does fighting inside the country justify your call for help from the forces of a foreign country, and especially a superpower like the Soviet Union?

[Answer] During the administration of the late President Nur Muhammad Taraki, the first chairman of the Revolutionary Council and prime minister, we realized how difficult it would be for Afghanistan, for its army and for its people to confront all these pressures and this armed aggression. Therefore, we decided to ask the Soviet Union to send some limited military units of its army to Afghanistan, and we repeated the invitation during Amin's administration.

The Soviet Union hesitated, but it finally became convinced that the independence and security of Afghanistan were in danger and that they were being threatened directly from abroad. They, therefore, decided to comply with our request, and they sent us a few limited military units from their army. I want to mention here that the Soviets had in the past sent us a few military units before the new stage of the revolution.

When the new leadership assumed power, we renewed our request and we affirmed that it was necessary for the Soviet Union to send a few limited

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Soviet units to Afghanistan. We did this in fact on the basis of the friendship and neighborliness agreement that we had signed with the Soviets on the 5th of December 1978.

[Question] It is being said that Soviet troops are amassing on the Iranian borders and that the Soviets' ultimate goal is the oil wells.

[Answer] These charges which are being made by U.S. imperialism and by the reactionary countries who revolve in its orbit are not true at all. The Soviets have denied these charges totally and severally.

There is nothing in fact to prevent the establishment of friendly relations between us. We may have some disagreements with some of the figures in Iran, but we are certain that we can overcome those disagreements and that we can establish ways to build a strong relationship with Iran.

I believe that we can also establish friendly relations not only with Iran, but also with the Pakistani people.

We Will Not Interfere in the Baluchi and Pashtun Questions

[Question] Will Afghanistan resort to agitating the Baluchi and Pashtun questions against Pakistan to respond to what you are saying is an effort by Pakistan to arm Afghan rebels?

[Answer] I would like to indicate at the outset that our proclaimed policy is a policy of friendship and cooperation with all the countries, and even Pakistan. We do [in fact] have a mutually strong relationship with the Pakistani people.

As far as ethnic matters in Pakistan are concerned, this question concerns Pakistanis only. The Baluchis, the Pashtuns or the people of the Sind Province, for example, do not have good relations with their government, but this is their business. I want to state here that we have fraternal relations with the Baluchis and the Pashtuns, but that we have nothing to do with their problems.

[Question] I heard here from informed sources that while attending the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Havana the late President Nur Muhammad Taraki had agreed in principle with Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq and with Iran's [former] minister of foreign affairs Ibrahim Yazdi on a peaceful solution to the question of Afghanistan based on democratic principles.

[Answer] We have said repeatedly that we are prepared to solve all problems and disputes peacefully and without resorting to force, but it seems that they are not prepared to solve this problem from which they are benefiting for numerous reasons.

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We welcome the return of Afghans who have been living in Pakistan. When these people come back, they are coming back to their country and to their homes. Let me say it quite openly that after this new stage for the revolution in Afghanistan, the present circumstances are quite appropriate for the return of those who have been abroad. We will make our utmost effort to persuade them to return. Ultimately, however, the question will depend on them and how they will respond to our open invitation.

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OPPOSITION GROUPS DESCRIBED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 Mar 80 p 42

[Article by Badr al-Hajj: "The Political Map of the Opposition"]

[Text] When the Afghan political parties failed to coexist peacefully with each other, they resorted to seeking aid from the influence of strong, neighboring foreign countries. Afghanistan was ruined as a result, and it lost its independence. The correspondent of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI is making a quick sketch of the map of political forces that are opposing the present regime which is friendly to Moscow. He says that these forces are divided into basic groups: (1) the Islamic forces; and (2) the Maoist forces. Each group is also divided into numerous factions which fight with each other at the same time.

The Moslems

Islamic forces were organized for the first time in 1965, the same year in which the Afghan Democratic People's Party which is now in power was born. A few Afghan young men who had studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo had taken the initiative to organize these forces. They returned to Kabul and to the Afghan cities to organize the Moslem Brotherhood Association. Some of these young men had been studying at the College of Theology at the University of Kabul before the April 1978 coup.

The principal declared objective of these groups is "to fight communism and to establish an Islamic regime in Afghanistan."

During the first stage of Muhammad Daud's administration the Moslem Brothers were subjected to severe persecution because of their opposition to the fact that Daud was cooperating with the communists and had made them partners in his government.

When Muhammad Daud expelled the communists from his government, however, and began a broad campaign to arrest and execute their leaders, it was the Moslem Brothers to whom he turned [for support] during the last years

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of his administration. When the Marxist Democratic People's Party assumed power in 1978, a new campaign against the Islamic forces that were led by the Moslem Brothers began. These forces confronted the military campaign against them with a guerilla war in the countryside. They were receiving assistance from outside the country. The Moslem Brothers are [now] divided into the following divisions:

\* Hizb-i Islami is led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and is considered the party of the intellectuals. This party was supported by former Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in return for the Soviets' support for the Baluchi rebels in Pakistan.

\* Jam'iyat-i Islami is led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a graduate of al-Azhar University and former teacher at the College of Theology at the University of Kabul.

\* Jama'at-i Islami is led by Sabqatullah Mujaddidi who owns land and many farms in Afghanistan.

There are other organizations also such as Jabha-yi Islami which is led by Mulay Muhammad Nabi, and the Afghanistan Islamic Movement, which is led by Sayyid Ahmad Ghaylani.

It was recently announced that these organizations have united under the name "The Islamic Alliance To Liberate Afghanistan."

The Maoists

Before Muhammad Daud carried out his coup against the royal regime in 1973, the Maoist forces exercised a great deal of influence among the intellectuals and the peasants in the northeastern province of Afghanistan which is close to the Chinese borders. These forces were united under the name Shu'la-yi Jawid or the inextinguishable flame.

But with the advent of Muhammad Daud to power and with his cooperation with the Soviets, strife within the Shu'la-yi Jawid began around the position of the group vis a vis the new regime. Some considered Muhammad Daud a traitor, and others considered the new regime to be a tool of the Soviets. The Shu'la-yi Jawid Party was therefore divided into five sections, and it is not now known how many sections and factions constitute the Maoist forces today.

Leadership in Shu'al-yi Jawid was collective. It consisted of Akram Yari and his brother Sadiq Yari, Mastarad Bakhtari, Dr Fayiz, Dr Hadi Mahmudi and his brother Rahim Mahmudi. Disagreements developed between the members of this leadership and the members of the party, and the following parties emerged:

1. Guruhi Inqilabi or the Revolutionary Group led by Dr Fayiz who had criticized Shu'la-yi Jawid for being opportunist. It is known that this party is loyal to the ideas of Mao Tse Tung only, according to Dr Fayiz.

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2. Akhqar or al-Shararah [the Spark] is led by a person whose name is Dr 'Akif. This party advocates fighting to build the Marxist-Leninist Party in Afghanistan. It supports the Albanian line against the Soviets and against China, and it printed the thoughts of the leader of the Albanian Communist Party, Anwar Khawjah in Persian and distributed them in Afghanistan.
3. The al-Shafaq al-Ahmar [Red Dawn] Party is led by persons who have not declared their names. They only announced that leadership [in their party] was collective and that it is inspired by the Chinese and Albanian line which was led by Mao Tse Tung and Anwar Khawjah.
4. The Organization for the Liberation of the Afghan People (Surkh) is led by Sadiq Yari who receives his instructions from the Chinese Communist Party and its present leadership.
5. The Shu'la-yi Jawid group includes the names that are left over from the original collective leadership.

Other Parties

1. Hizb-i Afghan Millat is a chauvinistic, nationalist party advocating Pashtu nationalism and calling for the unity of greater Afghanistan which includes sections of Pakistan and Iran.
2. The Musawat [Equality] Party is led by former Prime Minister Maywandiwan who is advocating a struggle to achieve progressive democracy. This party publishes a secret publication called AL-MUSAWAT, and is considered one of the parties that is leaning towards a U.S.-style democracy.
3. Hizb-i Millat (Jarayan-i Demokratik-i Millat-i Afghanistan) seceded from Hizb-i Millat Afghan in 1971. It is advocating Marxism-Leninism in accordance with the Soviet mode and is publishing a secret publication called MILLAT.
4. There is a group that follows Muhammad Tahir Badakhshi who broke with the ruling party. He is leading the armed opposition troops in the province of Badakhshan which is adjacent to the Chinese borders. It has been noted that Badakhshi who advocates Marxism belongs to the Tajik ethnic group which he considers to be a persecuted group in Afghanistan. He has recently given this group the name the Organization of the Freedom Fighters, the Toilers and the Oppressed of Afghanistan.
5. Another group of those who are nationally oppressed seceded from the Badakhshi group. They are led by Ba'ith Bahrani who spent a long time in jail during the administration of Hafizullah Amin.
6. The Majid Kalakani group seceded from the Shu'la-yi Jawid. Kalakani was a student at Kabul University. He stabbed and killed the dean of the college where he was a student, and then fled to the mountains during the

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administration of Muhammad Daud. From there he began to set forth [the ideas of] Marxism-Leninism. He is now leading the National Opposition Front which includes Maoist groups whose numbers amount to 20. This is in addition to the Khomeyni supporters. Kalakani's policy advocates the escalation of the armed struggle, the expulsion of the Soviets and the overthrow of the government.

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BURHANUDDIN RABBANI INTERVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21-27 Mar 80 pp 43-45

[Interview with Burhanuddin Rabbani by Badr al-Hajj: "Interview with Revolutionary Leaders in Pakistan's Peshawar; Burhanuddin Rabbani Reproves Arabs: 'How Can You Fight Zionist Occupation and Have Reservations about the Soviet Occupation? We Have Been the Closest Moslems to the Arabs; Today We Are Asking Moslems To Help Us and To Exert Pressure on the Russians'" ]

[Text] The correspondent of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI moved from Afghanistan to Pakistan and met with Burhanuddin Rabbani in the city of Peshawar, which is near the borders between the two countries. Rabbani is one of the most prominent revolutionary leaders. [Our correspondent] brought from Rabbani an appeal and a mild reproach to all the Arabs from hundreds of thousands of Afghans who have become refugees on the other side of the borders.

The city of Peshawar in Pakistan, which is near the Afghan border, has been turned into a principal command center for the Islamic organizations that are opposed to the Afghan regime. Leaders of the Afghan Islamic opposition issue from this city, which is visited daily by scores of foreign journalists and correspondents, their military communiques and their activities inside Afghanistan.

Anyone who drives a public vehicle in Peshawar knows where the Afghan organizations are located. No journalist needs to make a telephone call to these locations to set up an appointment to meet one of the leaders. The matter is very simple: it is possible to go directly to any one of the offices of the Islamic organizations and to go into that office without being searched or questioned. One can meet whomever one wants and then leave without any complications or security measures.

Pakistani laws require that any foreign journalist contact the Pakistani authorities to obtain permission to take pictures and to meet Afghan leaders who had fled from Afghanistan. But these measures require a waiting period of several days. For this reason the taxicab driver took a short cut through all these measures at the airport and took me with him to the main office of the Jam'iyat-i Islami Party which is led by Mr

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Burhanuddin Rabbani, one of the most prominent leaders of the Afghan opposition and one of the leaders of the Moslem Brothers in Afghanistan.

The office of the Jam'iyat-i Islami Party is located behind a car repair workshop in one of the districts of Peshawar. I was not searched when I went into the office, and in the hall scores of Afghan refugees were seated with their children drinking tea and talking. There were scores of posters on the walls and green flags.

I asked one of those who were there, "Is it possible to meet with Mr Burhanuddin?"

His reply was, "You may go into the northern room and ask there!"

Two persons were seated behind two old typewriters in the northern room which was decorated by a big green flag. I asked one of them, "Where is Brother Burhanuddin?" He told me, "Wait a while."

After a while a bearded man carrying a rosary in his hand walked into the room and asked, "What do you want?" I replied, "I want to meet Brother Rabbani." He said, "Here I am."

"I am Burhanuddin Rabbani, graduate of al-Azhar University in Cairo and former teacher of Islamic Theology at the University of Kabul."

Burhanuddin Rabbani has addressed the Islamic Conference which was held recently in Islamabad. He addressed the conference as the official spokesman of the Afghan Islamic opposition organizations. Rabbani is about 40 years old and has been living in Pakistan since May 1974. This was after the late Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Daud had discovered a plot to overthrow his regime that had been prepared by Rabbani with the cooperation of Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, the leader of the Afghan Islamic party. Since then Gulbuddin and Rabbani have been working from Pakistan against the successive governments in Kabul.

When the Pakistani National Coalition began its campaign in 1977 against the government of the late President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Burhanuddin was at the forefront of the demonstrators against Bhutto. This was due to the exclusive support Bhutto was giving to the Islamic party that was led by Hikmatyar.

Today, Rabbani is reaping the fruits of his support for Bhutto's opposition. He is getting the support and the approval of the Pakistani government and also of the Pakistani Islamic parties. The text of the interview with the leader of the Jam'iyat-i Islami Party follows.

A Working Paper for the Moslem Rebels

[Question] Mr Rabbani, is it possible to summarize the steps that have been taken by the Islamic groups on the road to unity?

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[Answer] In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate, we have taken some steps with regard to unifying the six groups, and we have agreed on a working paper. The six organizations whose leaders met are Jam'iyat-i Islami, Hizb-i Islami, Jama'at-i Islami, Jabha-yi Islami, the Afghanistan Islamic Movement and the Afghanistan Liberation Front. We agreed to begin searching for a way to unite our forces and to draw up an action plan for the unity that we pray God will soon be completed.

Everyone committed himself to this decision, thank God, and matters so far have been well coordinated between everybody. We are hoping, in case we do come to a final agreement on all matters in any shape or form, that we make an effort to elect a supreme council to run the political and military action.

[Question] But the organizations are fighting separately. In the province of Kandahar I noticed that the organizations were fighting each other and the Russians at the same time!

[Answer] I would like to mention that we recently began sending directives and orders to all the groups to work together and not to allow [their] differences to affect their holy war, especially since they are fighting in one trench. God willing, we will achieve results in that regard.

But you must not forget that as Moslem freedom fighters we are united in the effort to champion truth and to liberate our land. The method of action that we are following is characterized by full coordination. There is no fundamental difference between us.

[Question] Since there is a consensus of opinion as you say, why hasn't the provisional government that you said you would establish soon been proclaimed yet?

[Answer] We said that we were in the process of forming a government in the liberated land. But we are the ones who decide when to do so and not the journalists. For your information, there are no problems whatsoever with regard to the formation of the government and the territory that will be controlled by the government. We have liberated vast sections of land, and we can retain control of this land despite the presence of hundreds of Russian soldiers who are occupying our land.

The reason why declaration of the provisional government has so far been delayed is that we wanted to know the position of the Islamic countries and the position of the non-aligned countries and the other countries vis a vis this matter. That is, [we wanted to know] which one of these countries will support us after we proclaim this government?

There is something else in whose light we decided to postpone such an announcement. We would like to have all the fighting organizations collectively announce their final decision on this subject. We prefer that we be

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in agreement and that we have one statement. We will make the final decision after the meeting of the supreme council for the six organizations. We hope this council will convene during this month, with God's help.

The Invasion of Afghanistan Is Not a Picnic

[Question] In the area of military operations, can you give us some of the information that you have available?

[Answer] In the first days that followed the occupation of our country by the Soviet army, the Soviets were proud of themselves. But they gradually began to feel the weight of the blows that were being dealt to them by the freedom fighters. They believed that their presence in our country would be a mere picnic, but although they hid behind the tanks, the first incident occurred near one of the airports that are close to Kabul. This airport has been turned into a military base for them.

When they arrived at this airport and sought to go into the city of Kabul, our brothers the freedom fighters opposed them. They destroyed a number of their tanks and killed a number of their soliders. This battle was merely the first shock. Afterwards the blows came one after the other in several areas in Herat, Kandahar of Jalalabad and Takhar.

On the morning of that day we received news from inside the country indicating that the Soviets had landed paratroopers in one of the airports of the northern province in Badakhshan. Since a number of Afghan army soldiers are stationed in that area, 80 Russian soldiers were killed immediately in the airport. Our brothers seized their weapons, and the Afghan army joined the freedom fighters. A large number of tanks was also destroyed.

Our statistics indicate that over 5,000 Russian soldiers and officers were killed. The guerilla war is also going on everywhere the Russians can be found.

But as I told you morale is high in our ranks. We are, however, confronting thousands of tanks. The Russians are relying heavily on tanks to protect themselves. They bring 70 or 80 tanks into every small town. We are now in the process of preparing a detailed plan of action inside the city of Kabul where we are facing many problems, most importantly that of providing ammunition and weapons. This is the principal reason behind the postponement of military operations inside Kabul.

[Question] Is it possible, for example, to see one of your Soviet prisoners?

[Answer] It seems that you are doubting the truth of what I am saying. But that is all right. You are free to believe what you want. On our part we do not keep prisoners. The freedom fighters are not concerned about prisoners. They only fight the enemy and eliminate him.

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[Question] But don't you think that taking a Soviet soldier prisoner may be an indication of your strength on the one hand and may be beneficial in offering you information about the movements of the Soviets?

[Answer] Man, this is a secondary matter! We are fighting and we know quite well how to fight our enemy who has occupied our land and disregarded all international customs and laws.

[Question] Are the Arabs responding to your action, and how do you evaluate the position of the Arab countries vis a vis the Afghanistan crisis?

[Answer] The Arab and Islamic countries have been extremely reticent in the matter of Afghanistan. These countries did not have the courage, the strength, the power or the boldness for action from the first day. They confronted the matter with caution and circumspection. Until this day all that happened with regard to the Arab countries is that they collected some contributions. We also did not receive the help and the assistance that we had expected from these countries. They did not pay us the necessary funds, nor did they undertake any serious initiatives.

All that we received from the Arab and Islamic countries are some statements supporting our positions in some newspapers. Unfortunately, we did not get any kind of military support so far.

[Question] There are assurances from several sources that there are U.S., Pakistani and Chinese military experts in your training camps.

[Answer] All these assurances are lies and inventions. We challenge the Russians and their client in Kabul and we challenge all the countries to bring [their] delegations here to see the refugee camps. We challenge them to look in every village and city for foreign experts or for weapons other than Soviet weapons.

(At this point Mr Rabbani asked for one of the guards. After a while a guard came in carrying a Kalashnikov machine gun). We seized this Kalashnikov from a Russian officer. We captured tanks, field guns and modern weapons from the Russians, and we have no choice but to fight with Russian weapons because we did not get any weapons from other countries.

[Question] But light Soviet weapons are made in China and may be obtained from Western sources.

[Answer] What you are saying may be true. But I want to assure you that our weapons are Russian and that we seized them from the Russian army. We have no American, Chinese, Pakistani or Arab weapons. Some journalists went to the refugee bases and took some pictures and took from us some statements. Those journalists may have taken advantage of the opportunity and they may have begun to write as they please.

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The Russians know more than anybody else that except for their own forces there are no other foreign forces in Afghanistan. It is the Russian army that is occupying our country. The only foreign expert in Afghanistan is the Russian expert. The only weapons that are destroying our homes and killing our children are Russian weapons. We took our weapons from the Russians and from their clients.

Rebuke for the Palestinians

[Question] Mr Rabbani, the Arab countries did not offer you aid as you are saying, but what about the position of the Arab organizations? What, for example, is the position of the PLO?

[Answer] With much regret I say that the position of our Palestinian brothers was not what we had hoped for. We had placed great hopes on the position of the citizens of Palestine. At any rate and regardless of their position, we still consider Palestine to be the land for which we must sacrifice and for whose liberation we must become soldiers. We consider ourselves soldiers [fighting] for the liberation of Palestine whether the PLO supports the Soviet intervention or not.

As far as the Afghan people are concerned, let me say plainly that none of us expected a statement such as that which was issued by some of the leaders of the PLO who welcomed the Russian occupation of the land of an Islamic people who have been determined to fight side by side with their Palestinian brothers to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem].

One more time [let me say] that I believe that it was politically inappropriate for an organization that wants to fight foreign occupation to issue a statement supporting the occupation. How can they welcome the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and fight the Zionist occupation [of their country]?

At any rate we hope that they will correct their position on this matter. But as far as we are concerned, we consider the Palestinians to be our brothers in arms and struggle, and we look upon Palestine as land that must be liberated.

[Question] What is your assessment of the Indian position?

[Answer] India has played a major role in the establishment of a front of non-aligned countries. It would have been more appropriate for the leaders of India to refrain from taking sides in this matter. The differences they have with some countries in the area should not have affected their positions.

As far as we are concerned, we would like to say that it would be better for India and for countries other than India not to support a colonialist action that blatantly interferes in the internal affairs of others, and

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ignores international laws, human rights and all moral and humanitarian principles.

We also hope that the Indian government will correct its position vis a vis Afghanistan because the people of India and Afghanistan have old and historical ties of friendship. We are primarily interested in the friendship of nations. The people of India are on our side, and we hope that their government will also be on our side.

[Question] What about Iran's position?

[Answer] Our Iranian brothers supported us. The Iranian government condemned the Russian intervention in our affairs, and Imam Khomeyni himself defined a clear and well-known position vis a vis the question of Russian intervention. President Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sadeq Qotbzadeh did likewise. We are grateful to [our] Iranian brothers for their position, and we hope that God will help them and that their revolution will succeed.

Arabs Must Appreciate Circumstances of Afghanistan

[Question] The United States has assumed a public posture that is sympathetic with your cause. But how do you view the U.S. position which supports the removal of Egypt from the [ranks of the] Arabs and pushes it closer to Israel?

[Answer] [The establishment of] political relations with Israel is a regrettable [step] that the Egyptian government is undertaking. This is considered a violation of the agreements of the Arab League.

[Question] Mr Rabbani, you rebuke the Palestinians, but when it comes to the U.S. position vis a vis the Palestinian question you are satisfied with expressing regret!

[Answer] We do not have the position of a public prosecutor and especially under these circumstances. Our Arab brothers must understand that what is happening in Afghanistan does not concern the people of Afghanistan alone. What is happening in Afghanistan is rather part of a plan which seeks to eliminate the other countries economically, politically, intellectually and culturally. The Soviet intervention in our country is a serious threat to the countries of the Gulf, to the oil areas, to the Middle East and to world peace.

We are asking our Arab brothers not to be spectators in the question of Afghanistan. They have to provide us with sufficient support because our cause and the cause of the al-Aqsa Mosque are among the primary questions that concern the Islamic world today.

Afghanistan must become an impervious barrier against Soviet encroachment. The best land where Russian pride can be destroyed is that of Afghanistan.

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With some capabilities we can turn Afghanistan into a security barrier for the Arabs and the world. We must, therefore, retain Afghanistan despite everything.

We are also asking our Arab brothers and especially the young among them to assume a courageous posture against Soviet intervention and to show their sympathy with us and against the occupation forces either by demonstrations, sit-ins or any other means.

We are asking the Arab workers to boycott Russian airplanes and ships so they can compel the Russians to get out of Afghanistan.

It need not be said that we are part of an Islamic, Arab nation. We have common hopes and sorrows. As afghans we have ties of friendship with the Arabs that differ from the other relations we have with Islamic countries. We are the closest people to the Arab and Islamic countries. The Afghans wanted to fight more than once in the Palestine War, and there have been thousands of volunteers in every village who wanted to fight in Palestine.

We are part of an ancient Islamic nation, and our problem is mutual. We are asking that the Arabs take an interest in our question. We are asking that they help their brothers as much as possible so that we can liberate our country. On this occasion we would also like to thank all our Arab brothers who took part in supporting their Afghan brothers and in condemning the shameless Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

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IRAN

UK PAPER REPORTS ON IRANIAN OIL DEALS

LD241027 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 24 Apr 80 pp 1, 44 LD

[Article by Simon Henderson in Tehran and Anthony Robinson in London:  
"Iran in Romania Oil Deal"]

[Excerpt] Iran has announced that she will sell 100,000 barrels a day of oil to Romania, and has hinted that other deals with Eastern Europe have been signed and will be announced this weekend.

Iran is looking to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as a source of imports and alternative trade routes following the sanction measures adopted by EEC states and Japan in support of the U.S.

The Carter administration last night welcomed the measures adopted by the community.

The Romanian deal, a 60 percent increase on volumes already being supplied, would make Romania the main buyer of Iranian crude now that BP, Royal Dutch Shell and 12 Japanese trading companies have stopped liftings because of diplomatic pressure and the high price.

Mr. Ali Akhbar Moinfar, speaking to the FINANCIAL TIMES yesterday in Tehran, said Romania was being charged the official Iranian price, which with premiums works out at \$35 a barrel. There was no barter deal involved. "It was cash."

The details of East European oil deals--Bulgaria is also reported to be involved--come at a time when Iran is talking of progress in talks with the Soviet Union in developing trade links.

Wide-ranging trade agreements have been drafted by the two countries and will be submitted to the ruling Iranian Revolutionary Council, Mr. Reza Salimi, the acting finance minister, has said in Tehran.

"Negotiations on the price of natural gas to the Soviet Union will be resumed shortly, and the two countries will reach an early agreement," he was quoted as saying.

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Gas exports to the southern Soviet republics were suspended earlier this year when talks on a major price increase broke down.

"Spare parts, raw materials and land lines of supply are the main issues with the Russians," according to a senior adviser of President Bani Sadr of Iran.

Iranian officials admit that Moscow is using the offer of much-needed spare parts for the Iranian oil and gas industry as a tactic to get gas exports resumed.

They also want a resumption of the project to build a second gas pipeline. There are clearly difficulties in getting spare parts for the largely U.S. machinery in the oilfields, but with oil being produced at only a third of the level attained under the shah, this problem may be less serious than appears.

Assuming that Iranian supplies to Japan, BP and Shell are ended now, the problem for Tehran is less in producing oil than selling it. Eastern Europe's absorptive capacity for its oil is well below what is available, unless Russia decides otherwise for political reasons.

In that case it would in theory be possible for Russia to cut her own deliveries for Eastern Europe, provide temporary finance for higher East European purchases from Iran, and recoup this by selling more Soviet oil on Western markets.

East European states, except Romania, this year have an oil requirement from non-Soviet sources of only 140,000-160,000 B/D, though this is expected to rise to 600,000 B/D annually by 1985 provided tight fuel economy measures are effective.

Western oil industry sources point out that the Iran-Romania agreement effectively resumes the 100,000 B/D deliveries that Romania was receiving from Iran until 1978.

Since then the Romanians have been seeking substitute supplies from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya and other sources. They were even forced to ask Russia for oil for the first time and secured Soviet agreement for limited supplies of under 20,000 B/D annually.

Romania's domestic oil production is about 300,000 B/D, while her refinery capacity is about 640,000. Total import requirement therefore is about 340,000 B/D.

Romanian refineries have been working below capacity and planned imports this year are believed to be about 240,000 B/D. The Iranian offer is a major help in achieving this target, and so helping Romania fulfill her refined product exports.

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TUNISIA

TRIAL OF GAFSA INCIDENT MEN VIEWED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 Apr 80 pp 26-28

[Article by Souhayr Belhassen: "The Mold of Misery"]

[Text] Tons of weapons, dozens of dead and wounded, the avowed intention of overthrowing the regime: Never had a trial seemed to fall so perfectly within the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice as that of the authors of the attack on Gafsa, which began on 10 March in Tunis. And yet, one had the impression that one was attending common law hearings!

Accused of violations of state security, attacks, membership in a terrorist organization with headquarters abroad and collusion with foreign interests, the 53 defendants appear to be more in keeping with their past police records than with these charges. More than half have been convicted in the past for robbery, physical attacks and violence, armed threats, drunkenness, crimes against decency and procuring. This is especially true of the young men who emigrated to Libya (generally illegally), precisely for their police records, which made it even harder for them to find jobs. While in some cases they admit having killed persons, none gives any political justification for his participation in the Gafsa incident.

Nine of them were sent to Lebanon to gain experience fighting with the Palestinian resistance (see JEUNE AFRIQUE, No 997). There they learned, in the cafes and restaurants on Boulevard El Hamra in Beirut, that a "Tunisian revolutionary" was recruiting and willingly volunteered in order "to go home again," nearly all said. One understands them better when Ahmed Mergheni, one of the two main leaders of the operation, explains to the court how he recruited them.

The leaders of the Palestinian extremist organizations in Lebanon, who were to supply him with men, presented their conditions: The movement heading up the operation had to be Marxist. An Arab Unionist, Mergheni could not accept. He would therefore proceed to recruit men himself and take what he could get: "by-products" of the Palestinian resistance, trained in the same mold as those who would be hired in Tripoli itself: the mold of misery that engenders violence and hate.

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"As Long As We Get Something Out of It...."

Out of the 53 defendants, 34 actually participated in the operation. The others were accomplices, "poor devils," often enlisted without their knowing it, like the old man and his friend picked up in Sidi Bou Zid to...celebrate a wedding in Gafsa and who found themselves there, locked up in a house for refusing to participate in the "revolution." Then there were the two bricklayers who had come to build a house and who, when they saw the weapons, reacted, one taking a powder and the other sobbing apologies. Thus, outside of the members of the commando, the other defendants became involved either out of ignorance or ulterior motives, never because of their convictions.

The best example is the two Tunisian smugglers from Skhirat, in the governorate of Kasserine, on the Algerian border. Whether they had to smuggle tea or weapons was of little importance to them, as long as they got something out of it! And indeed, they got so much out of it that they became the handymen of Ezzedine Cherif, alias "Le Borgne" [one-eye], considered to be the brains behind the plan (JEUNE AFRIQUE, Nos 996 and 997). They confess having located storage places for the weapons, rented a house for the commando group they brought across the border and participated in the attack.

With regard to the armed operations, the affair was very carefully planned and was technically perfect, with every chance of succeeding. Nothing was left to chance. For the two barracks, two young men were chosen who had done their military service there. Four bazookas were provided for these two buildings and for the police and National Guard posts. Until 0900 hours on Sunday morning, the operation was going ahead as planned.

In court, Ahmed Mergheni is the only one to have confessed: "I was working to overthrow the regime." Already in 1972, he was sentenced to 5 years in prison at the trial of the Progressive Front of Tunisia, for attempting to blow up the buildings of the party, the American Cultural Center and the radio station. But although on the television program during which he was interviewed he was impressive in his confidence and convictions, at the trial, he tried, without denying his share of responsibility, to show that of Ezzedine Cherif.

#### Reality

According to his statements, Ezzedine Cherif had "many more contacts with the Algerians than with the Libyans." The entire truth will never be made public, inasmuch as Tunisian authorities decided to remain silent on Algerian participation. And a large part of the questioning took place behind closed doors.

In his charges, the attorney general evoked at length "the hegemonic designs of Libya, which has provided weapons for the arm of subversion in Tunisia." But according to Ezzedine Cherif, Libya "is executing orders;

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Algeria provides the brains." Based on the investigation and the questioning, in fact, one realizes that Libya did supply the weapons and that everything else came from Algiers. But there was a great deal of improvisation. In particular, a great deal of hope was placed in the Tunisian domestic situation, which it was thought had reached the breaking point. It was therefore enough to distribute weapons and watch the city rise up, followed by the South. This was the position which the Algerians supported in order to convince Ezzedine Cherif. The latter, a Youssefist implicated in the plot against Bourguiba in 1962 and sentenced to 10 years in prison, left Tunisia for Libya 5 years after completing his sentence. Cut off from reality, with no other relations in Gafsa than a former cellmate, he was to conceive an entire plan around that man, who would let him fall.

Detente

If the Algerians "tricked" Ezzedine Cherif, as he states, making him believe that Tunisia was on the brink of insurrection, he made them believe, for his own part, that he had 400 to 500 men in Gafsa. Therefore, Mergheni stated, "when I asked him where the men were, he introduced four recruits to me, saying that they were the leaders of about 100 men each."

Tunis has been the scene of much more heated political trials, during which the floor of the court has been transformed into a platform for the defense of democracy, public freedoms and the rights of man. Today there is nothing like that, but the extreme youth of the defendants, reduced to their role as mere common law criminals, and the fact that they were manipulated work in their favor. The attorney general asked for the death penalty for all those carrying weapons, 34 persons. It was a stiff penalty. The indictment bothered President Bourguiba, who on that very day announced the conditional release of eight trade union members out of the fourteen who were former leaders and who had been in prison since 3 August 1979. This gradual detente undertaken by the chief of state, who also lifted the exclusion of the Destourian Socialist Party affecting certain socialist democrats, may well be blocked by a harsh verdict.

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TUNISIA

BRIEFS

MOHAMED SALAH FLISS JAILED--Mohamed Salah Fliss, one of the five Tunisian "perspectivists" released on 3 August 1979, has once again been jailed at Borj Roumi Prison. The conditional release under which he was set free was annuled after the events in Gafsa, although he was not brought before a commission as provided by the Penal Code. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 Apr 80 p 42] 11,464

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