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JPRS L/9229

1 August 1980

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 28/80)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

DADDAH TO TUNISIA--Moktar Ould Daddah, former president of Mauritania who has been a refugee in France, will take up permanent residence in Tunisia at the end of the current year. [Text] [Paris PARIS MATCH in French 18 Jul 80 p 70]

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AFGHANISTAN

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF RESISTANCE IN KABUL

Paris L'EXPRESS in French 21 Jun 80 pp 92-97

[Article by Jacques Buob: "Resistance Movement in Afghanistan"]

[Text] It is now Kabul's turn to burn. Not from the fires of war. Not yet. Kabul is now burning with another and more intense flame, the flame of hatred of the occupying forces and of the need to resist them. Hatred of these blond, barechested young men stretched out under the wing of their aircraft or in the shade of their tank, young men who also pace up and down the streets of Kabul in their strange summer uniform, shaven head covered by an odd-looking scout hat, and with a Kalashnikov rifle carried at hip level. Hatred of this haughty army so confident of its strength, and hatred of the Soviet Union overconfident of its impunity and its genius. In colonized Afghanistan, Moscow now lays down the law only to remnants of the Afghan Army and a shadow government.

"Where do they think they are? In Hungary or Czechoslovakia? But this is Afghanistan!" The man who spoke to us in this fashion holds an important position in the Afghan civil service. We shall not mention his name. He is not a terrorist, not a freedom fighter, not a member of the resistance movement. He is a civil servant who had no other ambition than to rise step by step in his career field until one day he finally became a cabinet minister, undoubtedly at the cost of surrendering a few principles. He is not a hero. He is scarcely a good Moslem. But he is at the end of his rope. He is fed up with having to see his deputy minister stand at attention and receive instructions from a Soviet adviser nonchalantly sitting at his desk. He can no longer put up with receiving orders under the pictures of Brezhnev and Lenin, as is the case everywhere in each ministry where Russians have assumed control of all the affairs of state, all television programs, and the Bakhtar News Agency's dispatches.

That evening, in the house of a friend, he became angry each time a big Antonov [transport aircraft] or a helicopter flew over: "They are using our airports, our installations. They are trampling on our land, killing our children solely upon their own authority. They have stripped us of everything: our liberty and our pride."

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Kabul is seething. This city of 800,000 has a large number of civil servants, tradesmen, and military personnel. It has seen so many coups d'etat that one would think it had resigned itself to its fate. Yet Kabul has flared up twice already. First on 22 February when the Chahr-Chatta (four arcades) bazaar erupted, erected barricades with the help of the Hazaras, the country's most underprivileged and scorned ethnic group. This uprising was very savagely put down by the Afghan Army and party militiamen, armed and uniformed young boys, who fired on the demonstrators. The Russians also fired on them in the vicinity of the large "silo." These victims were Kabul's first martyrs.

Subsequently, in late April and early May, agitation erupted in the secondary schools and the university. It began in the girls high school. School-girls of 13 to 18 refused to return to class: "We shall go back when the Russians have left the country." At Malalai high school, they jostled the two Afghan soldiers guarding the entrance. They shouted at them: "You are women belonging to Russians." The two soldiers wept. Russian troops then arrived and the schoolgirls hurriedly fled, brandishing soda bottles. They spread into the streets. They were aware that some of their comrades in other secondary schools in Zargouna and Suraya had been killed the day before. They ran into Afghan troops armed with electric cattle prods. A swarm of blue dresses and white scarves dashed into the shabby houses on the slopes of the hill. Women in the houses hid them in a double-locked room. When the soldiers knocked at the door, one of the older women opened it. The soldiers asked: "Who is in that locked room?" "The women of the house," the old woman replied. "Our men are not here and refuse to allow anyone to see them. You shall not enter the room."

Skeptical but convinced, the soldiers, behaving as good Moslems, departed.

The girl who told us this was 17 years old. She had been expelled from her high school. To be readmitted and allowed to take her examinations, she was told she had to sign a statement promising to behave. But she refused to sign. It takes courage to meet with a clandestine reporter in Kabul. When I interviewed her, she kept nervously twisting the strap on her handbag. She told me how in the Pul-i-Charki prison, her comrades, boys and girls, had been tortured with electrical devices in an effort to get them to admit they belonged to a resistance group. She described how two of her school-girl friends had come out of the prison broken automatons, unable even to remember what had happened to them.

"Aren't you afraid? I asked.

"No," she laughed.

"And what about your parents?"

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"They both work in the government."

"Aren't you afraid you may get them in trouble?"

She hesitated, but her answer was firm: "There are times when you have to make a choice."

"Are you prepared to become even more involved," I asked.

"I am prepared to throw bombs, to become a terrorist," she answered.

"Why?"

"To make the Russians leave and then have an Islamic and nationalist republic established in our country. We are Moslems. That is our culture. That is our very soul. Nobody will ever wrest it from us."

The Kremlin's extraordinary deployment of forces has not frightened the Afghans. On the contrary. By fighting against somebody stronger than them, by dying for Islam, they go straight to Heaven. Did the Russians underestimate Afghan pride to this extent?

Lapis Lazuli and Hashish

In the streets of Kabul, a person can amuse himself by listlessly saluting an Afghan soldier standing guard in front of a ministry building. Because he takes you for a Russian, the guard clicks his heels and returns your salute. His action is automatic, but it is definitely the only outward sign of respect a Soviet can expect in Kabul.

On the highway to the north I became caught by chance in a Red Army convoy and to top it all I was riding in a green jeep. This gave me an opportunity to observe the cold, blank, and absent stare with which Afghans look at the occupier.

On Chicken Street--the main tourist thoroughfare with its antique dealers, jewelers, embroidered jackets, lapis lazuli, and hashish--a group of schoolboys walked by two Russians in civilian clothes and exclaimed: "Russians go home!" In the elementary schools, small children deliberately spill their daily glass of milk and cry out: "We do not want anything from the Russians!" Senior and key Afghan civil servants are fleeing the country in droves because they were too intimately involved with previous regimes to now join the freedom fighters and are too urbanized to carry arms. In an effort to check this heavy drain, the government is no longer issuing passports. But the exodus of intellectuals and technically trained persons has found another way out of the country, namely the mountain route. For 10,000 afghanis (1,000 francs), escape agents will guide a fugitive to Pakistan.

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This is a dangerous trip for many of these intellectuals who have had little physical training. They are easy prey in the hands of an escape agent who is not always reliable and may abandon his client deep in the mountains or kill him in order to rob him. Nevertheless, people continue to try this escape route. Once on the other side of the border, they buy new passports, travel to Europe and rejoin those relatives and friends awaiting them there. Half of the homes in Kabul's new residential district are vacant. Before leaving them one night--suddenly, because escape agents give them no advance notice--their occupants barely had time to throw the key under the door.

Picking Up the Dead

As night falls over the Kabul basin, the temperature becomes much cooler and the streets become empty. By 2230, one-half hour before the curfew, tanks begin rumbling through the streets to take up position at key city intersections. The tank crews are Afghan but two Russians are posted alongside each tank. Troops patrol the streets. This is the hour when the Soviet or Afghan soldier, or the militiamen, becomes more tense, more apprehensive. There is the sound of sporadic bursts of gunfire. Soldiers on guard around the garrisons are afraid, and their challenge, "Who goes there?", can be heard breaking the nocturnal silence.

Early in the morning at sunrise when the curfew is lifted, about 0430, teams begin picking up the bodies of persons killed during the night. These are victims of the bitter strife between the two wings of the party--the Khalq and the Parcham--as well as victims of the resistance movement which is only now starting to become organized in Kabul. But it is already making a name for itself.

On Saturday 14 June, shopkeepers in front of the Afghan Stores, not far from the Kabul River, were speculating about the origin of some foul-smelling metal and wooden boxes on the sidewalk. Upon opening them, they found they were filled with human heads. It is said that they included the heads of Russians. Heads of Russians are also reported to have been found inside trash cans in the modern housing development of Mikrorayon north-east of the city where Soviet advisers and their families are housed in small, cramped HLM [Low-cost Housing Program] apartments. And also there is the report that the bodies of three senior Red Army officers were tossed in front of the Soviet Embassy one fine morning. The ladies from Moscow, with their chignons and large derrieres, hardly any longer shop outside Mikrorayon, except when escorted by armed soldiers. The lure of "easy" money still prompts certain Russians to take risks, such as the officer who swaps automobile wheels for Afghan rugs or that other officer who resells loads of vodka at 100 afghanis (10 francs) a bottle.

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When Russians leave the confines of their encampment, they become apprehensive. If you look too long at the soldiers riding in trucks through the streets in the center of the city, they become suspicious and you can see them tighten their grip on their assault rifles. The widespread rumours in Kabul reach their ears. They know that out there in the countryside, the mighty Soviet Army is making no headway, is becoming bogged down, and is dying in ambushes. They also know that Kabul, although formidably defended, is not safe and that all the cannon, tanks, and helicopters are helpless against the small beggar who someday may perhaps toss a grenade at their feet.

The February and May demonstrations proved one thing to the mujahidin, namely that the Kabulis, whose true loyalties might possibly have been suspect, did, in fact, back them. Strengthened by this popular support which is becoming increasingly organized, two resistance groups currently share influence within the city. They are the SAMA (Organization for the Liberation of the Afghan People) whose anti-Soviet leftist progressives are more generally called Maoists, and the engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's highly Islamic Hezb-i-Islami which is strongly supported by the Moslem Brotherhood and certain Arab countries.

There is talk of 8,000, or even 13,000 armed rebels inside Kabul. By making allowances for some exaggeration, the consensus within Western embassies is that there are a few thousand freedom fighters prepared to launch an offensive inside the city and render Kabul as totally insecure as other major Afghan cities. Separated by a deep ideological gulf, the two groups have tentatively formed an alliance of convenience. A large majority of the population tar the SAMA with the same brush as the Khalq and the Parcham, communists faithful to the Kremlin. But the fundamentalist Islamic groups need the progressives, need their highly efficient organization and their competency in psychological actions, a skill particularly useful in the university and the secondary schools. A member of the SAMA I met at the home of a friend told me: "No, you will not get me to say anything bad about the Hezb-i-Islami. We are fighting the same battle with the same single objective, to drive the Russians out of the country. After that, we shall see what can be done, Afghan to Afghan."

The King? Why Not?

The Soviets may well be succeeding in doing something nobody has yet managed to achieve in this country, namely unify the Afghans. Of course, this patchwork of ethnic groups divided by religion, culture, and a history replete with centuries of discord, will still not become unified overnight. It is reported that a possible unifier, King Zahir Shah, has left his Roman exile to gauge public sentiment in the Paktia region. The King? Why not? He is an Afghan and a Moslem.

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The cement of Islam has already unified the people in their hatred of the Russians. Thus far, this is the only success Moscow has achieved. Some 6 months after its spectacular entry into Kabul on a bright Christmas night, the mighty Soviet Army is bogged down. The Afghan resistance movement, with its skimpy rifles and dirty turbans, is holding the polar bear at bay. Hadn't the Soviets promised to annihilate this resistance? Yet it is gaining ground. The fact is that if today Kabul is seething, it is because it knows that everywhere else, the Russian-Afghan troops have not managed to gain control. Above and beyond the anecdotes, the reports of fighting, the exaggerations, and the legend being conjured up, an observer need only note the state of the country to judge the depth of the swamp in which Moscow is sinking.

The large-scale operation launched this winter and designed to cut the mujahidin off from their rear-area bases in Pakistan, has failed. Peshawar is now more than ever the capital of Afghan political organizations. The border remains pervious from the province of Paktia in the south to the province of Badakhshan in the north, and the mountains are in the hands of the rebels.

It was also believed that the Soviets would be content, initially, to control the cities and major axes of communication, which are relatively few in this country. The Soviets have apparently not achieved this minimal objective. Today, martial law has been decreed in the western city of Herat and also in the southern city of Kandahar. The government has more or less lost control of these two cities, the second and third largest in the country. They are the scene of a daily succession of assassinations, other acts of violence, and search-and-kill operations. In Kandahar, the provincial governor travels to his office in one of the army's armored vehicles. The provincial governor in Herat has been killed. The government has had leaflets dropped over the city announcing that Herat will be bombed if the situation there does not return to normal. Herat has been destroyed three times: by Alexander, by Genghis Khan (who left only 40 survivors), and by Tamerlane. Will it burn again a fourth time?

The major routes are no better controlled. Kabul taxi drivers refuse to take the road leading eastward to Peshawar. A bus ventures along this road only on certain days. Between Sarobi and Jalalabad, before moving out toward Pakistan, vehicles have to wait until a convoy is formed and escorted by armored cars at the head and rear of the column.

Elsewhere, on the southern route to Kandahar and Herat, the mujahidin largely control the coming and going of vehicles. They are reported to have complete knowledge of who is who. If a person collaborating with the government sends a shipment of goods to be sold in Kabul, his vehicle will be burned and its driver kidnapped. If a vehicle belongs to a friend, it

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will be allowed to pass. The price of rugs in Kabul continues to rise despite the slump in the sale of such items. Producers fetch a very high price for the risk they take in transporting their products.

Even the highway northward from Kabul to the Soviet frontier via the Salang Pass is not free from hit-and-run attacks, an old guerrilla tactic that has stood the test of time. Yet this highway is very heavily patrolled and protected. It is the Red Army's vital main supply route. Hence it is of major logistical importance. Every single section of this asphalt road is under the watchful eye of a Soviet soldier. Nevertheless, in a convoy of some 30 vehicles we passed in the vicinity of Charikar, 70 km north of Kabul, we noted two windshields with bullet holes right in front of the driver's seat. Unperturbed behind their sunglasses these Russian soldiers, who closely resemble American GI's continued on their way, rhythmically tapping the outside of their vehicle's door with their fingers.

Hazaras Eat Roots

In the very heart of the country, in the immense Central Highlands of the Hazarajat region, the mujahidin are suffering more than anywhere else. The Russians have little difficulty controlling the very few access routes to this region of mountain lakes and eternal snow. Up there, it is still very cold at night. Seeds have not yet germinated. In Kabul, I met a certain Hussein who had gone to the Hazarajat region to fight along with his Moslem brothers who have Mongol features and belong to the Shiite religion, two factors that make them pariahs in the eyes of other Afghans. Hussein told me the Hazaras were already eating roots. There was a shortage of matches and to start their fires the peasants had reverted to the traditional method of striking flint against some hard metal. In these inaccessible mountains, there are still some men who fight with old tripod-mounted long-barreled rifles dating back to the mid-19th century British invaders.

"It is difficult, of course," said Hussein, "but we do manage to supply them by mule and by taking some very tough trails. They are especially short of medicine, drugs, and doctors. As for everything else, the Hazaras can subsist on very little and they will always fight."

Time is on the side of the Hazaras, the Tajiks with their tight turbans, the proud and domineering Pushtuns (or Pathans), and the Turkomans, homesick for Samarkand. "The longer the revolt lasts," Hussein explained, "the greater the chances of one day seeing unity among so many disparate groups, even though it may be a union of convenience. The more time elapses, the more the international community will be able to take the Afghans seriously. One day or another, that community will ultimately supply weapons to the Afghans, just as Iran, China, and allegedly the United States are already doing."

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Heavily Bomb-Laden Helicopters

The rebels have now arrived at the gates of Kabul, on the mountains ringing the city like a perfect amphitheater. And while they have never considered a suicidal attack against the capital, the rebels are here, and little by little, one by one, they are descending into the villages in the foothills. The Russian-Afghan troops, who already have a great many problems elsewhere, have conducted search-and-kill operations in the region northeast of Kabul from Istalif to Paghman, and Moscow has brought in two additional divisions. There are currently 125,000 Soviets in Afghanistan. The vast Soviet base of Khaikhana, northeast of the city, now stretches unbroken over several kilometers up to the airport where, upon returning from a patrol, MiG's land by releasing their deceleration parachutes. This base's area is large enough to house three divisions. Dozens of sand-colored, camouflaged, heavily bomb-laden helicopters wait in neat rows to take-off on assigned missions. Upon their return from such missions, 15-20 minutes later, it is noted that they have dropped their bombs not very far away at the base of the mountain slopes in an effort to drive the mujahidin higher up into the mountain.

Their courage will not be weakened by the death of Majid Kalakani, a leader of the resistance movement, along with 10 officials of Hafizullah Amin's government and members of his family. Majid was a legendary figure called the "Man of the North" because he operated north of the Chamasi Plain. He was convicted of banditry. He headed SAMA's military branch. "The struggle will go on," said Hussein. "There is no lack of other leaders, bandits or politicians, to take his place."

In waging a war that is becoming more difficult day by day, the Russians are increasingly alone. The Afghan Army, which they only support officially, no longer has more than 30,000 men. And it is not reliable. A unit of the 41st Brigade dispatched to Bamian, city of the giant Buddhas cut of solid rock in the mountain, rebelled, killed the governor, and attempted to descend toward Kabul. This was another case of mass desertion with weapons and equipment, and it reportedly triggered bombings in the Istalif area and reinforcement of the Soviet forces.

Military advisers are desperately striving to rebuild an Afghan Army weakened by successive purges. Young men are being forcibly enlisted. Deferments are being rescinded, and everyday more and more young men of military age are going into hiding, fleeing so as not to fight against their brothers, and being forced to do so by the Soviets holding, or almost holding, a gun at their back.

Without a truly effective army on which to rely, and without popular support, the sole Afghan elements still loyal to Moscow are a puppet government and its militiamen.

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Babrak Karmal, a recluse in the former royal citadel in the heart of Kabul, is the very image of a prisoner. Behind the palace gates guarded by Afghan soldiers, the Red Army alone rules. Babrak Karmal is now surrounded solely by Soviets: his chauffeur, his bodyguard, his chef, etc. Rumor has it that he is a sorrowful sight. In Hafizullah Amin's day, Babrak had the reputation of being an enlightened and responsible man, a highly acceptable successor. Why then did he let himself get into his present mess? His gardener (an Afghan) is quoted as having revealed that Babrak strolls about the palace gardens without a necktie, shoelaces, and belt. He is reported to have tried to commit suicide. The Russians occasionally have him appear with a few staunch mullahs in order to have the photograph of the meeting appear in the NEW KABUL TIMES and thus, naively, show that Babrak Karmal is a good Moslem. To gain Islamic support, Babrak will send 8,000 pilgrims to Mecca this year. Amin had sent merely 400. One Afghan told us: "Even if Babrak were to build 50 mosques in Kabul, he would obtain absolutely no recognition or thanks from the people." Babrak's father, a former Royal Army general, no longer wants to see him.

Cabinet Never Meets

Mrs Anahita Ratebzad, the minister of education and the prime minister's alleged mistress, is in no better state. All those who know her consider her to be an intelligent and determined woman. Yet she now appears to be very listless. Depressed by the savage repression of student demonstrations, she reportedly submitted her resignation. It was refused, of course.

When we asked a Western observer if the cabinet ministers ever met from time to time, he replied: "It's highly unlikely." To stop the feuding between the two wings of the party--the Khalq ("the people," Amin's faction) and the Parcham (Babrak Karmal's faction)--the Russians have imposed a strange coalition government including such men as Assadullah Sarwari, a deputy prime minister, and Ali Keshtman, the minister of planning. Sarwari formerly headed Amin's Secret Police (the Kom) and thus was Keshtman's torturer. The aforementioned Western observer stated: "If Keshtman were to meet up with Sarwari, he would kill him. That is why, in my opinion, the cabinet never meets, never discusses anything, and lets the Soviets have free rein."

The Khalq could well shatter this facade of unity. They now intend to show that they were not the ones who invited the Russians, but that indeed the Parcham did. Some Khalq members have already individually joined the rebellion or attempted to do so. If the party's largest and best organized factions were to suddenly secede, the pro-Soviet Parcham could easily count its troops. The total would no doubt be close to zero, once the apparatchiki and militiamen were withdrawn. Was it the Parcham that, losing its foothold, attempted a ridiculous and dangerous provocation by having toxic gases released in Kabul's schools and public places? The government made a great to-do over it, officially accusing American intelligence agencies. But no one here was fooled.

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One day, a school teacher was writing on the blackboard when a pellet of paper hit her on the back of the neck. She quickly turned and asked: "Who did that?" And the entire class replied in unison: "It was American imperialism."

'We Are Chilly'

What are the Soviets to do? Double, triple their number of soldiers so as to reach a level of 400,000 men, the minimal troop strength required according to strategists, to hold the country? Will they not then be forced to increase their means of repression and crush the resistance movement by bombing it even more harshly than they are doing today? And thus become involved in an escalating conflict similar to one for which another superpower, before them, has paid very dearly? Because by offering so much resistance, the mujahidin will indeed ultimately receive substantial aid. It is a nasty dilemma for Moscow.

I almost forgot to mention that at the end of my interview with the young girl from the Malalai secondary school, she told me: "I want to say something to you about France. The Warsaw meeting between Giscard d'Estaing and Brezhnev greatly disappointed the Afghan people. You are participating in the Olympic Games. You are going to run and jump while your hosts are killing us and depriving us of our freedom. We expected a great deal from France. Today we are chilly." She then got up and left, saying "Thank you." A well-mannered schoolgirl who intends to throw bombs.

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AFGHANISTAN

CARTER WAS INFORMED OF GISCARD-BREZHNEV DIALOG

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 4 Jul 80 pp 38-39

[Article by Marc Ullmann]

[Text] It is Sunday night, between 2330 and 2400 hours, and Mr Giscard d'Estaing is walking his dog. Venice is quiet, Venice is beautiful. Like the lapping of the waves against the facades of the palaces, the agitation of the statesmen gently breaks on the serene magnificence of the setting. The French president enjoys these restful moments. All day long, he has been in the thick of summit discussions. The message Mr Brezhnev had sent him regarding the number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the imminent withdrawal of certain combat units had placed him in a position which was both enviable and embarrassing. Envable because he was the man whom through the news arrived. Embarrassing because he ran the risk of appearing to have one leg on each side of the fence.

Six Other Leaders Listened to Him

Mr Giscard d'Estaing "took the floor" at lunchtime to avoid any misunderstanding. Shoving aside his plate, cutting short individual discussions, he clearly explained why, according to him, Mr Brezhnev's message was the natural consequence of the Warsaw conversation. The six other leaders of the great Western industrial powers listened to him. Carter, the American, Schmidt, the German, Cossiga, the Italian, and Trudeau, the Canadian, were there. The Japanese prime minister, who died suddenly a few days ago, was replaced by his minister of foreign affairs, Mr Okita. Of course, Mrs Thatcher was there too.

So, Giscard d'Estaing explained that he had told Mr Brezhnev in Warsaw that there could be no return to an international climate of detente as long as Soviet troops remained in Afghanistan. On the contrary, there would be the permanent risk of a heightening of tensions. He told Mr Brezhnev that the Soviet Government would therefore have to look for a "political solution" that would enable it to withdraw its expeditionary corps. And when we say political solution, we are talking about the installation of a regime in Kabul which is acceptable to both the people of Afghanistan and the Kremlin.

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Still relating his Warsaw conversation, Giscard d'Estaing said that he at that time considered the military aspects of the situation. According to him, the USSR would not manage to control and cover the map of a country of 15 million people and the size of France with troops amounting to about 100,000 men. Also, the two considerations resolve themselves into one: Either Mr Brezhnev will gradually reach the point where he will send a contingent of 500,000 men to Afghanistan, and this would be a sign that he has abandoned any thought of compromise, or he will reduce the number of soldiers, and this, on the contrary, would be an indication that he is abandoning any attempt to crush the resistance. In the first case, any hope of a return to a climate of detente would be definitively buried. In the second case, there would be deescalation and therefore the prospect of a political solution. Mr Giscard d'Estaing concludes that Brezhnev's message must be placed in this context. There is no reason for too loudly applauding a withdrawal which, for the moment, affects only some 10,000 men, but we must try to make the motion that has begun irreversible.

Basically, there are no differences among the Seven as regards the military situation. All Western information services attest to the fact that the Afghan Army has practically ceased to exist and that the Soviets themselves have to do the dirty work. Estimates of the number of Soviet GI's stationed in Afghanistan vary between 85,000 and 95,000. To this we must add about 25,000 men stationed on the Soviet side of the border but who make frequent invasions to support this or that "cleanup" operation. The Americans, who follow Soviet troop movements as closely as they can, think that there has been no very perceptible increase in the number of troops these past few weeks and Mr Brezhnev is almost telling the truth when, in his message to Giscard d'Estaing, he maintains that the comings and goings of military aircraft correspond to the simple replacement of certain units.

Does This Prove That There Is Total Agreement?

This did not keep Mrs Thatcher from announcing that she sees a diversionary attempt in Brezhnev's message. As one of her collaborators says: "The timing is transparent, but the facts are opaque." She insists on the need for avoiding any sign of division among the Western nations. The Russians would take advantage of that and we cannot even be sure that they would not tomorrow send back the troops they are today pulling back with so much fanfare.

Italian Prime Minister Cossiga immediately went everyone one better in connection with the idea that the Seven must at all costs offer proof of their unity. He proposes that they not wait until the conference is over to publish a statement on Afghanistan. Moreover, a draft has already been prepared and all that would be needed would be to add one sentence. That could be done the first thing in the afternoon. "We have taken note," the Seven say, "of the announcement made today of the withdrawal of certain Soviet military units from Afghanistan. If it can be confirmed, to contribute usefully to a solution of the Afghan crisis, this withdrawal must be permanent and ultimately followed by complete evacuation of the Soviet forces."

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Does this prove that there is total agreement? Or is this soft music merely intended to conceal the harsh sound of discord among the allies? The matter is too serious to be treated lightly. Therefore, at the risk of seeming complicated, I will answer the question in claiming that three levels are involved, depending on whether we scratch more or less deeply below the surface. At the first level, there is unanimity in the facade of smiles put out by official spokesmen. At the second level, there is whispered disagreement as to the best ways of pressuring the Russians into actually evacuating their troops from Afghanistan. Should they try to save face, as Giscard d'Estaing would have it, or, on the contrary, should they impose sanctions, as Mr Carter maintains? Then there is what is really behind it all, the observation that the disagreement on sanctions is more apparent than real since these sanctions are minimal, even symbolic.

Butter Has Already Been Sacrificed for Guns

Actually, there are only two actions which would really hurt the USSR. One would be an all-out resumption of the arms race. The Western economy could more easily sustain this than the Soviet economy, where butter has already been sacrificed for guns. The other would be massive aid for the Afghan rebels who lack weapons. Now it is clear that the most ardent advocate of sanctions, Jimmy Carter, is carefully avoiding moving in either of these two directions.

Furthermore, that is perfectly understandable. For over 10 years now, world equilibrium has relied on the notion of "parity" between American and Soviet strategic forces. This global parity does not prevent specific imbalances in terms of this or that weapons system or in this or that part of the world, but it does imply that neither of the two adversaries could destroy the other without being certain of being destroyed in turn. By dint of patience and continuity in its programs, the USSR has slightly benefited from this notion of parity. Today, Mr Carter is increasing the American military budget and we can predict that 3 years from now the pendulum will return to its center of balance or even swing slightly in the other direction. Between this and wanting to change the rule of "I've got you but you've got me by the tail," there is a gap that the U.S. president is not ready to bridge.

As for aid for the Afghan rebels, we must keep well in mind the fact that in massive form it could only enter the country through Pakistan and that country feels itself to be too vulnerable to risk doing so. If absolutely necessary, the United States would be capable of protecting Pakistan against a direct attack by Soviet forces, but its aid would be thin in case of an uprising of hostile tribes manipulated by the Russians. Now these tribes exist and Mr Brezhnev would only have to give the word for arms to be dispatched to the Baluchis, who dream of nothing but revenging themselves on their Punjabi "masters." The moral: The Pakistanis close their eyes to small convoys directed toward the Afghan resistance fighters, but are opposed to the shipping of large quantities of equipment and to any transiting of sophisticated weapons. Thus, as things stand now, the Afghan resistance

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has a few small Egyptian-made anti-tank mines, but it has no light ground-to-air missiles capable of knocking out combat helicopters.

So, what exactly are the sanctions being applied against the Soviet Union? Now that the grain embargo has been developed to the point of being insignificant, the only avenue left is the boycott of the Olympics. We could go on endlessly as to the ineffectiveness of such a move. As for me, I had hoped that it would be general in scope and that all democratic countries would join in. But we must agree that the USSR's global policy will not be changed by a measure of this sort.

When they met, just the two of them, late Sunday afternoon, Mr Carter and Giscard d'Estaing did not waste their time trying to convince one another of the usefulness or uselessness of using sport as a political lever. Instead, they reached agreement on their feeling that they had to support the efforts of the Islamic countries to find a political solution to the Afghan affair. Mr Carter said that his goal was not to "immobilize" the Soviet Union in a sort of 1980 version of the Spanish Civil War, but, on the contrary, to restore peace to this very sensitive part of the world.

It would, of course, be tempting to involve the USSR in a colonial-type war and thus tarnish its image in the Third World. All the more tempting since up to now it has been particularly the "imperialists" (even when they were providing economic aid) who played the role of villain. However, neither Mr Carter nor Mr Giscard d'Estaing nor any of the seven statesmen who are meeting in Venice deem it advisable to keep a fuse that is located so close to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf burning.

On the whole, it is better for the competition to be confined to the ideological domain.

This is why the Seven have in Venice approved a little dodge proposed by an expert who is cunning but discreet enough not to claim to be the inventor of the idea. They have officially invited the communist countries to join the Western nations and the oil-exporting countries in formulating and applying an aid program for the poor countries. Of course, the USSR will do nothing, but every means will be utilized to see to it that this is known in every nook and cranny of the world.

When We Talk About Dialogue, We Are Talking About Balance of Power

As far as the oil-producing countries are concerned, the prevailing mood is for dialogue rather than confrontation. But when we talk about dialogue, we are talking about balance of power. This is why the Seven have specified the objectives pegged for the implementation of alternative sources of energy. The United States in particular has let the extent of its aspirations in the domain of coal and coal-derived synthetic fuels be known. These aspirations are so vast that they amount to a warning for oil exporters. The latter must realize that 10 years from now the demand for their precious liquid will have ceased to grow. Alternative sources of energy will represent almost nine times the current volume of imports of a country like France. They will meet the new needs engendered by economic expansion.

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Monday evening, side by side, the Seven sported a happy smile. Even Mr Carter and Mr Schmidt seemed to have forgotten their altercation of 2 days before. And it had been a bitter one. The president had taken issue with the chancellor for not having clearly stated his intentions on German participation in the defense of Europe. The chancellor retorted that he had sent out the text of his speech in advance.

"I did not see it," said Mr Carter. "It's not my fault," Schmidt replied, "if your associates toss your papers into the wastebasket."

After which, the two statesmen calmed down and discovered... that they agreed on the matter.

How could they not agree on it? Japanese representative Okita had the last word: "We are all," he said, "in the same gondola." Venise oblige. ['Venice oblige'; a pun on noblesse oblige]

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ALGERIA

FLN CONGRESS EFFECTS MAJOR CHANGES

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 23 Jun 80 p 40

[Article by Youcef Adrari: "A Competent Congress"; words printed between slantlines published in italics]

[Text] Important qualitative changes inaugurate the launching of the first 5-Year Plan based on the key-word "The right man for the right job."

The proceedings of the FLN's Algerian extraordinary congress are going on at the same time this issue is going to press.. While we are awaiting its results, the significance and consequences of which we will analyze in our next issue, some elements deserve to be pointed out.

As regards the Algerian people, this congress is an event of crucial importance since it is being held at one of the most significant times in its national and international life. If it is true that the FLN has been advised to amend and adopt the next 5-Year Plan for development, the problems which have arisen during the past few months should have led the members of the congress to re-study the party's operation again, that is to say the need to review its statutes and readapt them in the light of the experiences and ordeals the country has sustained.

To fill the essential needs of the most disadvantaged in the nation: apply the key word /better living conditions/ for every Algerian man and Algerian woman; assure a preponderant place to all projects of a social order without abandoning the industrialization effort; see to it that a more equitable distribution of the national wealth is made, these are the preoccupations which dominated the first days of the debates of the extraordinary congress of the FLN, which began its work on Sunday 15 June.

The Sorcerers Apprentices.

In order to attain these objectives and that political, economic, social and cultural life can be improved and established on firm ground, the national charter clearly indicated the course to be followed: choose the right man for the right job, in accordance with the socialist option of the Algerian

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revolution; neutralize, even eliminate fractional trends, the agitators who seek to destabilize the kinetic energy of the nation, fight on the inside as well as on the outside, the intoxication of certain counter-revolutionary currents, frequently teleguided by imperialism and its allies, make those who run away or avoid it, assume the notion of responsibility, fight against waste, fraudulent dealings, against those who adopt a "wait and see" policy, and absenteeism. So many evils which the members of the central committee were bound to denounce during their debates last month.

The enemies of the Algerian revolution are known: all those who refuse to respect the national charter on which FLN's basic ideology is founded, who, according to president Chadli's own words, /seem to await the Messiah/ in order to justify their refusal to fully participate, with a true sense of patriotism, in the construction of their country. But these adversaries are not the only ones; they are backed up by foreign countries, by imperialism and its Western, African and Middle Eastern allies. An imperialism which is manifested every day by the threats brandished by the little king of Morocco, the Cairo coward, the Zionist aggressors, colonialist and French neocolonialism nostalgia, and the sorcerers' apprentices of the Carter-Brzezinski team.

Eighteen years after its independence, Algeria is preparing to establish a new historical landmark. Its success will depend essentially, as has often been said by its chief of state, not only on its vigilance but also and especially on its determination to see to it that its national charter--its best guarantee against deviations, interference with the socialist option which the people, in an overwhelming majority, had already chosen--be scrupulously respected. And that the people intend to follow this course whatever the cost, and however great the sacrifices.

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IRAN

UK CORRESPONDENT TALKS WITH BEHESHTI

LD030935 London THE TIMES in English 3 Jul 80 p 8

[Dispatch by Robert Fisk: "Iran's Power-Broker Defends Executions and Puts Revolutionary Freedom into Perspective"]

[Text] Tehran, July 2--Ayatollah Mohamed Beheshti has an unsettling habit of pushing his turban back on his head when talking to journalists, wiping his brow with a paper tissue and chuckling in a deep voice when confronted with questions that are meant to be difficult.

Imply that the Iranian revolution is not running quite as smoothly as he and his colleagues once hoped, and the Ayatollah looks at you sideways and waves his hand in irritation.

"When you study the history of revolutions," he says, "you will find that there are always problems. This is normal. When people here say they are unhappy, it is because they have not experienced a revolution before. There are problems--but they will be solved."

As head of Iran's supreme court, secretary of the Revolutionary Council, effective leader of the Islamic Republican Party and potential candidate for the presidency should Mr Bani-Sadr fall from office, Ayatollah Beheshti is a formidable power-broker.

He administers the Justice Department from one of the shah's old ministries, a great three-sided building near the Tehran bazaar.

Since the supreme court has not yet been chosen, the Ayatollah ostensibly views the country's revolutionary justice from afar. But the courts which order summary executions and the ministries which are so enthusiastically purging their employees contain influential members and sympathizers of the IRP, which is the largest party elected to the Majlis (Parliament). Not surprisingly, therefore, Ayatollah Beheshti professes to be unmoved by the current executions and dismissals.

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"Don't you see," he says, "that there have been very few people sentenced to death because of their failures in the ministries. Those people who have been sentenced to death are in a different category--they are opium or heroin dealers."

The Ayatollah does not believe that this has inhibited free speech. Indeed, the mere suggestion that Iranians might be frightened to speak their minds in a society which has become soaked in the idea of counter-revolutionary conspiracies, provokes a sharp cross-examination.

"It is true that there have been some restrictions for newspapers and press agencies," he says, "but not to the degree that people are frightened to explain their own ideas. I don't mind if people speak their minds. But can you tell me how many people you have spoken to who told you that they do not have enough freedom and liberty to explain their ideas?"

When you tell the Ayatollah that 20 out of 30 Iranians had expressed just such a sentiment, he comes back at once: "From which class?"

Tell the Ayatollah that they were mostly middle class and he wants to know in which part of the city they were interviewed, suspecting no doubt that they came from the wealthy north Tehran suburbs. Inform the Ayatollah that the interviews were conducted in the center of the city and he replies with a snort of disbelief.

"There are some groups who want to claim such restrictions of freedom in Iran," he concludes. "But I do not believe them. They have freedom enough to explain their own ideas."

The Ayatollah can be both specific and elusive when he discusses affairs of state. He told a press conference earlier today, for example, that a new prime minister would be chosen within 2 weeks, but he later added a rider that 2 weeks was the time limit for the Majlis to ask the president to appoint a prime minister.

After 2 weeks, Ayatollah Beheshti claimed, the Revolutionary Council would be dissolved. But he clarified this statement a few minutes later and said the role of the Revolutionary Council would end--implying that another role might be found for it.

He denied that there was a power struggle between Mr Bani-Sadr and the IRP.

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

AIRCRAFT TO SEYCHELLES--Libya is not limiting its diplomatic and military activism to Africa; 2 pursuit aircraft have just been delivered by Tripoli to the government of the Seychelles. [Text] [Paris PARIS MATCH in French 18 Jul 80 p 70]

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MAURITANIA

MOROCCO ACCUSED OF TRYING TO OVERTHROW REGIME

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 23 Jun-26 Jul 80 pp 22,23

[Article by Mohamed Razine: "Franco-Moroccan schemes. Who wants Ould Haidallah's downfall?" words printed between slantlines published in italics]

[Text] The feudalists and the bourgeois feel that their interests are threatened; they send out pressing appeals which are finding favorable echoes in Rabat, Paris, Dakar and as far as the Gulf.

What is happening in Mauretania? The Elysee shows signs of irritation. The Quai d'Orsay is not happy, the French military staff issues warnings to Matignon and Giscard d'Estaing, while the special services (SDECE) (Foreign Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Service) increasingly demand that some "action" is taken in order to hasten the downfall of the Ould Haidallah regime.

Some of the reasons for this warning to the French Government are expatiated by our correspondent Said Ould Khelifa in the article we are publishing hereunder. But some diplomatic sources, stationed in Nouakchott have given out certain detailed information which is worthy of being examined.

1. The thorough ministerial reshuffling carried out by Ould Haidallah in the past few months was interpreted by the Mauritanian feudalist and bourgeois classes as a prelude to Mauritania's adherence to the camp of the anti-imperialist countries of the nonaligned movement. These privileged Mauritanian classes who fear the socioeconomic actions which would gravely impair their interests, are making strenuous efforts in Paris and Rabat to sabotage the policy of their regime and encourage a coup de force, and even the assassination of their president.
2. King Hassan of Morocco, sent "confidential" messages and emissaries to Paris, Washington and to the leaders of the feudalist Gulf as well as to the African neocolonial regimes asking them to stop all economic and financial aid to Nouakchott, saying: /Only a few weeks, and at most 3 months' blockade will be needed for the regime, which is preparing to ask for Algerian military intervention, to collapse. It is necessary to act rapidly before the "fait accompli" is achieved"..."/

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3. It seems practically certain that Ryad and Dakar had replied positively to Rabat's appeal. More serious indeed, the Senegalese Government had promised to /envisage/ a diversionary maneuver with the assistance of some members of the black Mauritanian population. Other Gulf states are being pressured by Ryad to aline themselves with these positions.

4. The Elysee has asked its various governmental services to exert all necessary pressures on Nouakchott in order /to avoid a situation which would risk having grave repercussions on future Franco-Mauritanian relations/. To what situation is it being referred to? The recognition of the Arab Saharan republic by Nouakchott? A new political-economic agreement with Algeria? A policy of rapprochement with other progressive and revolutionary countries? With socialist countries? These are numerous eventualities and lead to much speculation in the diplomatic milieu.

However, what is very evident is that Paris and Rabat have become engaged in schemes and intrigues destined to overthrow the Mauritanian regime. And for the sole reason that they have not found as yet in the new regime any elements able to counteract or neutralize any policy capable of placing Mauritania in the camp of countries where anti-imperialism is vigorous, positive and consistent.

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MAURITANIA

LEADERS SEEK SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 23 Jun-26 Jul 80 p 23

[Article by Said Ould Khelifa: "A long desert Crossing"]

[Text] Has the time for unnatural equivocations and alliances come to an end? The answer is yes, but...

Decidedly, Mokhtar Ould Daddah's legacy does not stop poisoning the political life of a country sorely tried by the war. It should be mentioned that the many ties woven with some foreign powers under the old regime, were so compromising that only a long period of political stability is capable of unravelling them.

Since the coup d'etat of 10 July 1978, various succeeding teams tried to establish this stability. It seems that they could not succeed due to the principles which guided their activities. In fact, they were constituted on a patronage basis and not on a coherent policy. Hence, unnatural amalgamations and alliances prevailed--inevitable reverses of admixtures and personal relations. Such structures in any case could not face the immense tasks necessary for national recovery and even less confront the traps set by foreign capitals which have not digested the Mauritanian-Saharan agreement.

Because it did not pursue to the end the purge promised under Ould Salek's government, Mauritania continues to pay for the result of its equivocations and compromises. However, although it is evident that the problems were not solved, they seem to be better understood. It is in this perspective that the thorough reshuffling which has been occurring recently should be included. There is no doubt that dismissing the defenders of feudalism and bourgeoisie can only result in positive repercussions on the policy which Ould Haidallah persists on enforcing since his accession to power at the beginning of this year.

This is not without embarrassment for Ryad, Paris, Rabat and Dakar who however are not standing still with their arms crossed. It is really from the Senegalese capital that a small group (Alliance for a Democratic Mauritania) is agitating, taking orders from the Moroccan palace. In addition, economic blackmail which holds sway in the Gulf states would also crash down heavily

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if Nouakchott recognized the SADR (Saharan Arab Democratic Republic). A real race against time is actually being run. As for Morocco and its quadron of allies it is a matter of preventing such an eventuality at any cost. Rabat is not oblivious to the consequences which such a step would have at the time of the next OAU summit. Fully aware of the stake at hand, the Mauritanian progressionist group affirm, irony of fate, that it is the recognition of SADR by the OAU which will guarantee the existence of the Mauritanian Islamic Republic.

To be sure, up to date Ould Haidallah has not let it be known that this was possible. However, the Algiers agreement initialled in August 1979 by the Saharans and the Mauritians, is explicit enough in this connection. At all events, the recent trip, of the leading Mauritanian in the East and in the Far East should allow him to adopt a more open attitude. During his long and complicated journeys Ould Haidallah did not always meet friends, Peking remains a striking example.

Important measures are about to be taken in Mauritania, where after having obtained the withdrawal of the French troops, it is increasingly clear that, for the political leaders, the solution to the problems can only be effected in a regional and/or continental framework.

Should Mokhtar Ould Zamel's recent visit to Algiers at the invitation of Mohamed Benyahia, his Algerian counterpart, be registered in this perspective? It is quite probable. But, once more, it is wise not to be too hastily optimistic since the debacle of the royal armed forces in the Western Sahara and the unparalleled economic crisis which our neighbors to the south, Senegal, are experiencing, could be the sources of new troubles in the region. Inasmuch as the Western protectors of these two countries are striving to remain the masters of the game.

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SUDAN

CURRENT DOMESTIC SITUATION SUMMED UP

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 216 23 Jun 80 p 25

[Article by Rachid Jawad]

[Excerpts] As to the Sudanese domestic situation, it does not stop deteriorating. While the black market takes on astronomical proportions in the wake of the government's decision to terminate the state monopoly on distribution and importation channels, the inflation rate already exceeds 70 percent annually. The price of sugar increased by 120 percent while that of other basic foodstuffs has climbed by 100 to 180 percent. Strikes and demonstrations attributed by the regime to "atheists" and "Communists," although simply an expression of public wrath, were followed by the arrest of several hundreds of men and women who with thousands of others languish in Sudanese prisons, particularly that of Kouber.

Lack of Respect for Commitments

On the other hand, the appeal launched by Numeiry to the opponents to "return to the country and contribute to the building of the nation" petered out. Nobody trusts him. And with reason: the leader of the Oumma party and head of the influential sect of the Ansars, Sadek el-Mehdi and the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, Cherif el-Hindi quite simply refuse to believe in the promises of a man who, they say, "never honored his commitments." Although El-Mehdi had made it up with Numeiry in March 1978 and had rejoined his regime, he resigned, 8 months later, from the Political Bureau of the USS (Sudanese Socialist Union) found by Numeiry to the capitulation agreements signed by Sadat at Camp David. As to Cherif Hindi he never wanted to return to Khartoum, but continued in exile to fight against the regime, insisting on the need to organize truly free elections. In other words, the "national reconciliation" campaign launched by Numeiry in July 1977 has totally failed.

Alone the Moslem Brothers--whose leader Hassan al-Tourabi joined the sole Sudanese party--rehabilitated and reestablished, support Numeiry. But their sympathizers, traditionally strong at the University, markedly diminished recently.

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Their loyalty to the regime evidently is linked to the Saudi petrodollars which continue to mould the internal and foreign politics of the Sudan. The quarrel between Ryad and Khartoum following Numeiry's approval of the Camp David agreements has in fact been replaced by reconciliation. Financier of the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia also obtained from Numeiry that he alters his aim and pretends to keep his distance from Egypt. Although the Sudanese ambassador in Cairo was recalled, relations with Cairo were never completely broken, especially since Numeiry cannot do without Egyptian military support. However it is to be noted that the relations between Sudan on one side and Irak and Libya on the other appear to normalize in some way after Numeiry reaffirmed in Tunis his loyalty to the Bagdad summit resolutions and his total commitment on the side of the other Arab countries.

Words and Actions

On this level Numeiry's speech on 25 May did not bring anything new. The head of the Sudanese State declared that Sudan's place is on the side of the Arab nation which struggles to liberate its territory and then recalled the Sudanese contribution to the Arab people's fight for the last 30 years. But these sweetened words mainly appear an echo of the Saudi positions destined above all else to reassure certain Arab capitals which "continue to doubt Sudanese loyalty to the Arab cause." But have not Numeiry's acts always belied his words?

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SYRIA

VIOLENCE, ARRESTS CONTINUE IN NORTHERN CITIES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 25 Apr-1 May 80 p 18

[Article: "Syria: New Assassinations, but the State Has Tightened Its Grip on the Northern Cities"]

[Text] Damascus--The few reports available here from Syria's northern cities mention that new assassinations have taken place of a number of partisans of the government. However, the armed forces have completely closed off these cities, including Aleppo, Hamah, Jisr al-Shughur and Dayr al-Zur.

According to military personnel coming from Aleppo, the number of armed forces surrounding the city and carrying out combing operations inside its street by street and house by house, is 25,000 soldiers. Among these are 5,000 from the forces of the defense detachments led by Colonel Rif'at al-Asad, the younger brother of the Syrian president, Hafiz al-Asad.

Arrivals from Aleppo are telling of acts of violence or theft during searches and arrests which include adolescent boys and girls. Meanwhile, colleges of closed down University of Aleppo are swarming with large forces with their mechanized units.

Eyewitnesses say that Aleppo's policemen have been stripped of their weapons, because of the regime's lack of trust in them. Most of them have been issued clubs and sticks. Meanwhile, patrols of modern tanks which the Syrians did not see before are being sighted in the streets. It is believed that they are suitable for inner city fighting.

The Syrian authorities say that they have discovered large quantities of arms in the sections they are searching. However, sources in the armed religious groups deny this. These sources say that in the area of Bab al-Nayrab, which is considered a religious and popular stronghold, the authorities have discovered nothing but five revolvers.

However, the Syrian authorities are arresting everyone found to be in possession of religious books or publications, especially the books of 'Isam al-'Attar, the leader of the Moslem Brotherhood in Syria, who has been living

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in exile for 17 years. It is going about that a severe sentence awaits whoever is discovered to have in his possession the secret magazine AL-NADHIR [The Herald] published by the Brotherhood. It is believed that it is printed in a European country and smuggled into Syria.

The Syrian authorities are looking for two of the prominent leaders of the radical religious groups, belonging to the clans of al-Qudsi and 'Atabih in Aleppo.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has learned that the Syrian authorities have appealed to the Christian clerics to condemn the "acts of armed violence" by armed religious groups. But the latter tactfully apologized that they do not want to involve themselves or their Christian communities in a conflict which is taking on a religious or sectarian character.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has also learned that pamphlets were distributed in the Christian quarters of Aleppo in which the armed religious groups pledge that they will not interfere with the Christians and reaffirm their respect for them and for the peaceful coexistence which the city has known for ages.

As a result of this, and in spite of the stormy events which Aleppo has witnessed, an atmosphere of harmony dominates the relationship between Christians and Moslems there.

One of the pamphlets says that the armed groups are not against the 'Alawi [Moslem Nusairi Sect] community itself, but against exploitation, corruption and tyranny in general.

Observers here believe that the offensive of the security forces succeeded in relatively freezing most of the activity of the armed groups, especially as these groups failed to present to the Syrian citizens and the opposition parties a program of firm and definite demands.

A number of senior Syrian military officers are frequently visiting Aleppo. Among them are Brig Gen Mustafa Talas, the minister of defense, who is married to an Aleppo woman from a well-known family and Rif'at al-Asad.

It is noted that groups of education citizens and former junior officers, including Alawis, are undertaking large-scale leftist activity in behalf of Mr Salah Jadid, who ruled Syria with an iron fist between 1966 and 1970.

It is believed that Mr Jadid and most of his major collaborators have been kept in an elevated wing of the al-Mazzah prison hospital overlooking Damascus ever since Hafiz al-Asad drove them out of power.

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SYRIA

FORMER MINISTER SEES DEMOCRACY AS THE ONLY SOLUTION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 18-24 Apr 80 pp 32-33

[Interview with Jamal al-Atasi, former Syrian minister and leader of Arab Socialist Union in Damascus; date not given]

[Text] Jamal al-Atasi, (age 59) is a psychiatrist and influential statesman, educated in many fields of study. He is a former minister with long experience in the nationalist movement in Syria through affiliation with the Ba'ath, then Nasirist movements. He was one of the first to associate nationalist thinking with socialist thinking. He was imprisoned and tortured during the regime of Salah Jadid (1966-1970) and welcomed the reform movement of Hafiz al-Asad. However, he is once again at variance with the state on the question of democracy. So what does this statesman and great thinker say today about what is happening around him in Syria and the Arab world?

Dr Jamal al-Atasi needs no introduction. He was a militant in the ranks of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, then under the banner of 'Abd al-Nasir. He is today still carrying the banner of Arab unity through the organization which he founded and heads, the "Arab Socialist Union." In spite of the difficulties experienced by this party, especially after the faction of Fawzi al-Kayali split off from the party, left the Syrian National Progressive Front in 1973 and joined the government, the party survived on the Syrian scene in one form or another.

Dr Jamal is a psychiatrist. He receives his patients, as usual, in his clinic in which medicine is mingled with politics. On the tables and chairs, medical and pharmaceutical publications and magazines are mixed with political reports of the Arab Socialist Union and other Syrian parties and organizations.

At seven in the evening, when the number of patients gradually diminishes leaders of the party and politicians of various orientations arrive at the clinic in succession. When the doctor is free of patients, he begins a democratic dialog such as Syria has been lacking these days. The debate

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intensifies and points of view differ. But there is finally agreement on one point--that Syria is in need of a new climate, an open and democratic climate.

Jamal al-Atasi strongly opposes terrorism. In one of the recent statements of the Arab Socialist Union, he said: "We oppose and reject terrorism in all its forms, from whatever source it may come, particularly that which nurtures bigotry, is nurtured by fanaticism, and stir up factors of national division. However, any national progressive force which is content with condemning or criticizing terrorist violence against the regime, avoid confronting the basic dimension of the problem.

In the clinic on Shahbadhar Street in downtown Damascus, I conducted the following interview with Dr al-Atasi.

[Question] After all that has happened and is happening on the Arab scene, what are the lessons which can be gleaned, in your view, from the past of the national struggle of the Arab homeland?

[Answer] Our concern and worry today centers on the matter of democracy. The postulates of the Arab revolution so far have been those of a national revolution (progress, national and pan-Arab integration, agricultural reform, etc). It did not focus on democratic principles. The presumption has been that the basic facts of civilized progress would come by themselves afterwards. There was no clear theory as to how to direct change, and there was no formula for social development. Progress was fragile, and for that reason you find today that the wave of retrogression is strong.

During the 50's and 60's, the good omens were many, and there was progress in spite of defeats. The Arab revolution was adhering to a general direction, and to a general guiding line, in spite of setbacks.

But after the year 1970, specifically, after the departure of 'Abd al-Nasir, the social changes which took place led to the emergence of a consumer society, and to a disruption of the broad social base of the masses, which was to be the foundation of the progressive movement.

[Question] Why is it that the issue of democracy was not on the minds of the various regimes?

[Answer] The groups which were in control brought about changes but they did not come up with solutions. They neither developed the idea of a socialist society, even in its simple form, nor did they develop a bourgeois society. The process of dictatorship and control led to the disintegration of society, and to similarity between the various regimes with regard to the social and class environment they brought about.

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For this reason, governments turned to native or imported resources and to the resources of international monopolist forces. Likewise, regimes engaged in open cooperation with imperialism in order to frustrate realistic movements for the sake of staying in power. Regimes sought to broaden their base through interests associated with them instead of relying on developing new social and political relations.

[Question] Can you illustrate this analysis of yours with examples?

[Answer] We notice during the last 2 years the blowing up of these regimes and the crystallization of new forms of popular reaction. We see today similar movements in many countries.

In Egypt, a popular movement is now taking shape. Even the forces which competed with one another in the past are joining hands today. The leftists, who were laying down long-range plans of leaps from phase to phase, are today focusing on more fundamental and more realistic goals.

Syria today is also experiencing a nationalistic climate. Civilian forces are demanding change for the well-being of the entire society. The concern of the various regimes is to undermine the social principles which can be used by movements of change, like the trade unions, which are being transformed into blocks of bureaucrats. The student movement was crushed. The peasants in the villages returned to their isolation. The countryside is migrating to the city.

Indeed, the movements which were presumed to be the pioneers of change have been robbed of their ideology. Slogans have become mere abstractions to justify state supremacy. And just when the people thought that the traditional line..., the Syrian countryside reverted to past conditions of quarrels among families, tribes and the sects.

The popular movements in the Arab homeland are now in need of a regime which would support the movement for change. Cumulative evidence makes us feel today that spontaneous factors can be transformed into an organized process.

Where Did al-Sadat Emerge From?

[Question] This means that the past stage of the national and pan-Arab struggle was doomed by the points of weakness which led to a setback.

[Answer] A combination of factors produced the setback: Fragility of progress; weakness of revolutionary forces; lack of planning; lack of emphasis on the democratic principle as a basis for building regimes. Therefore, the retrogressive movement came out of the heart of the progressive movement. From where did al-Sadat emerge? From Eastern despotic regimes. From middle class elements' domination of the revolution. Thus, capitalism of the state was merely transformed into a state of capitalists.

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Nasir's Formula Is Inadequate

[Question] Do you now criticize the experiment of Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir, even though your party bears the name of the last of his political organizations?

[Answer] The experiment of 'Abd al-Nasir was an attempt to create a practical basis for steering an existing movement in the Arab nation. It was an attempt to rebuild society and the state. There were, in fact, loopholes. We accept his experiment only with regard to its general orientation. We are mindful of the fact that every setback led 'Abd al-Nasir to try a fresh push forward. But he did not draw up a long-range program in his attempts to rebuild. He was content with a broad plan without adequate development. Indeed, he had aspirations for a national revolution having an Arab orientation. This is the general overriding character of Nasirism. But the formulas used were inadequate, although 'Abd al-Nasir was dedicated to change.

In the phase following the separation of Egypt and Syria, 'Abd al-Nasir drew up a charter and drew a picture of what Arab relations with foreign powers ought to be based on. Although this picture had some flaws, some of his ideas are being proposed in Europe itself today, particularly in left-ist circles. These ideas deal with, for example, the establishment of various factions of the people, the issue of the democratic road to socialism, and the issue of involving the greatest possible number of people in property ownership instead of making it merely public ownership.

Nasir Made Mistakes, But so Did the Others

[Question] There were those who accused Nasir of expanding the reign of the intelligence bureau in Syria, and substituting it for political parties.

[Answer] The fundamental weakness was on the part of the Syrian political forces, not on the part of 'Abd al-Nasir. It was wrong, of course, to abolish political parties without providing a real substitute and without deep understanding of the social and class structure. The formula for the general political structure of the Egyptian-Syrian federation was likewise not mature. However, the political forces lacked maturity too. They could see no solutions except through their conflicts, especially the conflict between the nationalist bourgeoisie and the communists.

'Abd al-Nasir had a chance to experiment by way of his regime. He dedicated his life to create a popular political base for the regime and to come up with a new formula.

The time for the political forces which he eliminated in Egypt has passed. It is incorrect to say that the parties dissolved themselves in Syria. The Ba'ath Party remained. So did the Communist Party. When the separation [of Egypt and Syria] came about, it became clear that the federation had initiated a movement of the masses. But the Left stood against the movement of masses instead of standing with it.

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[Question] Then where does the Left stand, if it does not stand in line with the masses?

[Answer] 'Abd al-Nasir created a popular movement through his nationalization measures and through dedication to unity. But the common denominator among the various forces at the time of the separation was deliverance from 'Abd al-Nasir.

This weakened the [political] forces on the scene, not the movement of the masses. These forces returned to action without forming a base among the masses.

Egypt Is a Basic Pillar

[Question] Let me recall names. Do you mean the position of Mr Akram al-Hurani had no justification?

[Answer] Akram al-Hurani, a true nationalist, played a large role in Syria, and still does. But he is doomed by a complex to political ineffectiveness. In any case, in spite of everything that has happened until this day on the Arab scene, the great gap is Egypt's departure. No [Arab] strategy can be built without Egypt. There can be no firm foundation without Egypt's return. The Egyptian society is the most developed Arab society and their expulsion from the scene is a big problem. We cannot create a substitute for them.

But the Egyptian crisis lies in the Egyptian intelligentsia. 'Abd al-Nasir used to say of them, "These people do not think." Today the group of men in the educated and ruling class is playing al-Sadat's game on the assumption that he will provide them with a new climate.

However, their overriding character is an opportunistic one. They seek refuge in the power of the state, and their ideology is one of dictatorship. The thing that bothered 'Abd al-Nasir most was, specifically, the intelligentsia, especially with regard to the fickleness and vacillation of the education class.

'Abd al-Nasir doubtless disregarded the role of despotic authority. The new thinking was not given a chance to crystallize and form a base. In addition, there was a lack of crystallization of political and social forces. The wide base of the educated class was opportunistic, and Egypt, even in the days of 'Abd al-Nasir, did not see a unity of direction among the educated leadership opposed to the state. This being so, al-Sadat knew how to manipulate specific factors. The question is, will this set-up continue indefinitely.

[Question] What is your answer?

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[Answer] It would not make sense if it did, from a historic point of view. However, the rise of a regional Egyptian structure allied with Israel will be a calamity for the Arab nation.

[Question] How do you view what has taken place in Iran?

[Answer] The Iranian revolution is positive from one standpoint--the power of the movement of a people to change a regime like the shah's regime. A general popular movement was able to do it by itself. As for what followed, that is something else. In Syria, the situation is totally different. Nothing like what happened in Iran can occur. Here in Syria, the people's aspiration is for the unity of the nation. The latest program of the Moslem Brotherhood does not demand more than democratic liberties, and does not propose any formula for rebuilding the state.

The Brotherhood Has Been Made To Look Bigger Than It Is

[Question] Do you believe that there is a danger of a sectarian explosion in Syria?

[Answer] The sectarian fighting exists, and is dangerous. The assassinations and the reactions to them, the emergence of armed militias in some areas, and the occurrence of armed clashes which have assumed a somewhat sectarian character, represent a new phenomenon. However, there is no doubt that the size of the Moslem Brotherhood has been made to look far larger than it really is due to the torrent of accusation against it. One of the Brotherhood's statements says that the treatment they are receiving "qualifies them to lead the people."

[Question] In your capacity as a militant Syrian in the ranks of the national movement, how do you see the current situation in Lebanon, and what solution do you see for the tragedy of the neighbor country?

[Answer] The problem is no longer merely a Lebanese problem. I, as a Syrian, desire the restoration of Lebanese patriotism, even in its former coexistential format, as an alternative to the present situation. When its regime was relaxed, Lebanon was a place where conflicting international and Arab points of view could coexist.

In 1958, the Syrians almost became involved in the events in Lebanon. I was, at that time, publishing the newspaper AL-BA'TH along with 'Abd al-Karim Chuhur, a great statesman and educated man. We refused to write a single word in support of the activities of 'Abd al-Hamid al-Siraj (the director of military intelligence at that time). We said at that time: "Lebanon must be preserved as a meeting place and a model of coexistence." 'Abd al-Halim Qaddur was sent to us to write an editorial siding with the Lebanese National Movement in AL-BA'TH. Our position in this regard caused us problems with the party leadership. Salah al-Bitar wanted to revoke the paper's license and others threatened to attack the offices of the paper with stones, saying that we were causing embarrassment for 'Abd al-Nasir.

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The Educated Are Responsible

[Question] Many today condemn the intervention of the military in politics. Do you not think that the civilian politicians bear a large responsibility for the involvement of the military in politics?

[Answer] The educated bear an enormous responsibility for the surrender of authority to the military. Their progressive and revolutionary stance were inadequate. They thought that the course they followed would produce the required changes. But they occupied the seats of power, although they had no basic idea of the principles of social and historical development. Today there is an effort to make amends for their sins and to make serious reassessments.

[Question] What is the solution now?

[Answer] The solution is the restoration of democracy. Some imagine that this is an academic matter. But there is an increasing insistence on this solution. Repressive operations have exceeded all bounds, and do not serve the interests of those who are pursuing them. There is a general feeling to this effect today.

Our Slogan: Recourse to the Masses

[Question] What about the situation with regard to the organization of the Arab Socialist Union following the difficulties it experienced in recent years?

[Answer] We left the National Progressive Front in 1973, before the war. We were criticized for this afterwards. We left weaker, but healthy. We did not give up on forming a united Nasirist Party after the departure of the group which thought that it had taken away the party itself with it--meaning the organization of Fawzi al-Kayali. In reality, all it took was a position in the government.

We stayed in politics after 'Abd al-Nasir. Our strategy still had its fundamentals grounded in reality. There was something wrong with the system. We proposed the democratic way as of that time. We began to rebuild new relations with other forces. Our slogan from then on became "recourse to the masses." We then started a dialog with the progressive forces and even with some elements of the regime.

[Question] What are your relations with other organizations on the Syrian scene?

[Answer] The present approach is to open a dialog with the communists, namely the group of the political bureau, i.e. Riyad al-Turk's group; with the revolutionary workers group; and with certain Ba'thist forces. Some of

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these forces are not large and the pressures they were subjected to in the past transformed most of them into marginal forces. However, what we are striving for today is to set in motion the broad labor base.

[Question] Are you dealing with the religious factions.

[Answer] We have no relations with the religious factors. But we will not reject them if they accept a national democratic program.

[Question] And the Communist Party led by Khalid Bakdash?

[Answer] Bakdash's group backs the existing situation, but receives nothing but contempt and mistreatment in return.

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SYRIA

RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE ON HIT LIST OF ARMED RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 18-24 Apr 80 pp 16-17

[Article: "Blacklist Includes the Mufti of the Republic and a Former Minister of Religious Trusts"]

[Text] Damascus--On the way to recovery in a hospital in a European capital is Shaykh Salah 'Aqlah (age 61). He is one of the Islamic ulema of Damascus.

Shaykh 'Aqlah, known for his close friendship with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad had been struck by a bullet which pierced his left cheek and passed through to his right temple. This occurred a few weeks ago when he was emerging from one of the mosques in the Syrian capital.

Friends of Shaykh 'Aqlah say that he had received more than one threat from armed religious groups. He was beaten up several times before the attempt to assassinate him took place. The said religious scholar, who is a teacher of religious curricula in Damascus schools, miraculously escaped death. He was sent at the expense of the Syrian Government to receive intensive treatment abroad.

A group of Moslem ulema are facing similar death threats from the armed religious groups. It is said that some ulema have received a blacklist which includes the names of those who have been "sentenced to death" for their cooperation with the current regime.

The blacklist includes His Eminence, Shaykh Ahmad Kaftaru (age 77), the Mufti of the Republic. He too is a personal friend of President al-Asad and one of the very wealthy citizens of Damascus.

The blacklist also includes His Eminence, 'Abd al-Sattar al-Sayyid, who was minister of religious trusts for some 10 years before he gave up this post in the recent reshuffle of the Syrian Government.

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The armed religious groups were able to assassinate Shaykh Zahir Kaftaru, a son of his eminence, the Mufti of the Republic, about a year ago. It is reported that his second son was exposed to a similar attempt.

Caution and fear still dominate the situation in Syria. Here, contradictory reports about the situation in the middle and north of the country are circulating. Tight supervision has been placed on the movement of non-Syrians there.

According to unofficial reports, the security agencies have been given 3 months to liquidate the "religious terrorists." A difficult operation is now under way in search for arms and ammunition caches. Actually, some quantities have been seized in the towns and countryside of the north, east and west (the coast). It is noted here that Syrian political organizations inside and outside the "National Progressive Front" are engaged in extensive activities and intensive contacts in a process of reexamination and self-criticism of their roles as well as of the policies of the regime.

Political pamphlets issued by these organizations are being circulated. All of them urge the regime to adopt a true democratic course of action, and express their extreme fear of the possible consequences of ignoring these demands.

As to the official and party press, it continues its large-scale campaign against "imperialism, reaction and Zionism" and would have these bear responsibility for what is happening in the country. It is observed that this press has attacked "the childish left." It is believed that it means by this term the group of Salah Jadid, who fell from power in 1970.

In this framework, the associations of lawyers, pharmacists and physicians have been dissolved. President al-Asad had received cables of support from groups within these associations representing members of the ruling party, factions of the [National Progressive] Front and a faction of the Communist Party led by Khalid Bakdash (age 70). The elected councils of these associations have been branded as "reactionary bourgeoisie." These councils had refused to send cables of congratulations to President al-Asad on his all-out campaign against the armed religious groups following the recent events in Aleppo and Hamah.

The Arab Socialist Union Party issued a statement in which it said that the events of Aleppo and other cities represent a "popular movement in which all classes have taken part and are not caused by the Camp David nations as the regime claims."

The statement demanded the lifting of martial law, the abolition of the state of emergency and of the state security tribunal, the institution of freedom of the press and of political parties, the holding of free elections,

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the release of those in detention, the elimination of shows of force and of stop-and-search operations, and the checking of inflation and high prices.

The Political Bureau of the Syrian Communist Party in the city of Aleppo issued a statement in which it described the events of Aleppo in moving terms. The bureau calls for the release of detainees, the abolition of the state of emergency and the lifting of martial law and of restrictions on civil liberties.

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TUNISIA

SPLIT AMONG COMMUNISTS REPORTED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 14 Apr 80 p 20

[Text] What is going on with the Tunisian communists? It was apparent that a fire was smoldering under the ashes. In recent years, two groups did in fact emerge and since 26 January 1978, the wrangling and disagreements steadily increased. Nevertheless, the unity of Tunisian communists withstood it all. Not any longer.

Tunisian Communists in France, both young and old, disappointed by what they describe as the "weakening" of part of the Tunisian Communist Party's leaders, have just made their position public. They reject the content of recent statements published on behalf of the PCT, as well as the latter's alliance with Ahmed Mestiri and the so-called "liberals." They stress the choice they have always recommended, that of a priority alliance with progressive Tunisian forces.

The statement published in Tunis on behalf of the PCT after the Gafsa affair was the straw that broke the camel's back. Those who have chosen to break with this line issued a statement in Paris denouncing "...the false communist accomplices who, come hell or high water, persist in the path of Ahmed Mestiri, who had already led them to label the young, innocent victims of 26 January 1978 as anarchists." They virulently attack "the false consensus that has emerged around the government following Gafsa, which embodies the concepts of the National Pact proposed by Mestiri, approved by the false communists and proving to be nothing more than a new edition of the famous national Union of Power..."

"...What we are now seeing in the Sahara should serve as a lesson: Because of their king's connivance with his American masters, young Moroccans believing they are dying for the unity of their country are in fact killing and dying for strategic interests that are totally alien to them. We do not want our suffering youth, (exile, labor camps, and so on), the victim of unemployment, to one day become cannon fodder for a regime which, in order to defend the privileges of a minority, will not hesitate to call on French and American protectors for which the courageous Tunisian people will pay dearly."

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TUNISIA

DIVERSE REACTIONS TO EXECUTION OF GAFSA ATTACKERS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 28 Apr 80 pp 16-17

[Editorial by Simon Malley: "The Crime"]

[Text] He began his reign in blood, the blood of a man who had been his traveling companion for 20 years: Salah Ben Youssef. He decided to have him assassinated and sent a commando group of secret agents, led by Zarg el-Ayoun, to cut him down in his hotel room in the FRG. Once the deed was done, the murderers were immediately welcomed in Tunis by Habib Bouguiba himself, who then congratulated them--he was to confirm it publicly and boast about it some years later--"for the patriotic task you have just completed." This is how he described the sordid job he had perpetrated against one of the most distinguished figures of the Neo-Destour Party of which he was secretary-general. And it was done solely because Salah Ben Youssef, a nationalist of integrity, had opposed the signing of the French-Tunisian agreement granting Tunisia internal autonomy while advocating continuation of the struggle.

At dawn on that Thursday, 17 April--at the end of a life which the Tunisian people will one day view as nothing more than a long, far too long, chain of corruption, misappropriations, political perversion and deterioration, accompanied by the inevitable consequence of crimes, imprisonments, torture and the execution of opponents--it was the hand of the same executioner that struck. Thirteen young patriots were immolated: workers, peasants, teachers and students, the representatives of an overexploited class whose only crime had been to sacrifice themselves in order to make themselves heard, to tell the whole world that the time had come to look at the misery, hunger, unemployment and sufferings of 6 million Tunisians. By means of a spectacular gesture, however desperate, they sought to demonstrate that the Tunisia run by this sick and senile autocrat, manipulated in turn by his wife, his son "Bibi" or the most dubious courtiers of a discredited, incompetent political class that was both unpopular and behind the times and history, had become a veritable inferno. They sought to prove that the overwhelming majority of the people lived under intolerable conditions of poverty, that oppressors and exploiters were to be found at all levels of government, that the billions amassed by the ministers, ambassadors and

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board chairmen and fraudulently hidden in Swiss banks or elsewhere by the Wassilas, Belkhodjas, Ben Ammars and their accomplices were the fruits of a racket that victimized a people. They wanted to show that the standard of living of that people was steadily deteriorating parallel with the enrichment of a political class which always finds justification for maintaining the status quo. The 1950's and 1960's marked the whole-hearted denunciation of Nasser, "dictator of the Nile." Then came Libya and Algeria, which provided Bourguiba with other targets. The local Tunisian or "foreign" press echoed his condemnation on command.

Bourguiba's supporters did not wish to allow the shouts of the heroes, the martyrs of Gafsa, to spread further in the neo-colonial night of Tunis. The protection of their interests depended upon their being stifled. The parade of these politicians, on whom Bourguiba had heaped insults and sarcasm, before the "Supreme Combatant's" palace to denounce the Gafsa revolutionaries and condemn, first Tripoli and then Algiers, solely in order to acquire a ministerial portfolio or a diplomatic post, was enough to make one vomit.

■ In this climate of "national unity," as Habib Bourguiba described it in a letter to one head of state who had asked him to spare the lives of those condemned to death, "How could I permit myself to back down? Even the pro-Libyan (referring to the creator of the aborted Tunisian-Libyan unity, Mohamed Masmoudi) knelt at my feet to ask forgiveness "for his past mistakes." I could not elude the voice of that national unanimity(...) and fail to teach tomorrow's sourcerer's apprentices a lesson.

Habib Bourguiba's crime will not go unpunished. We make this assertion, convinced that although mankind's memory is often short, that of the people is tenacious, lasting, permanent. Fear of prison, torture or the gallows never caused revolutionary heroes of centuries past to retreat. Nor will it ever discourage colonized, oppressed, terrorized peoples who know they have nothing to lose but a life of misery, indignities and shame.

One day, you, the assassin of Carthage, will pay for the innocent blood you shed with a cyricism equalled only by the scorn you show for your people. Remember, in the last moments of your life, the fate reserved for the Idi Amíns, Haile Selassies, Ould Daddahs, Pol Pots, Reza Pahlavis, Lon Nols, Thieus, Somozas and Bokassas. Do not forget what happened to Tombalbaye and Macias and only a short time ago Tolbert. You should be aware of two things, Habib Bourguiba: The Tunisian people will avenge this crime and the others and we will spit on your tomb.

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TUNISIA

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REACTS TO EXECUTION OF GAFSA ATTACKERS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 28 Apr 80 p 16

[Text] News of the execution of the 13 men condemned to death for their involvement in the Gatsa incident had the effect of a bombshell. The astonishment and consternation that gripped Europe was in direct proportion to "the hope that Bourguiba would pardon them."

A few minutes after the tragic announcement was made, Henri Martin, speaking on behalf of communist elected officials and those in the European Parliamentary, called for an interruption of the meeting to say: "I wish to express our emotion and voice our indignation over this bloody, iniquitous crime committed by Bourguiba (...), with utter disregard for the human individual and human rights. For the time being, there is nothing further I can add."

Louis Baillot, European communist deputy and member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, told the AFRIQUE-ASIE correspondent: "It is a crime and we can only condemn the attitude of a government that has defied the world, because numerous appeals were formulated everywhere asking for the pardon of those men condemned to death. It is a defiance of progressive mankind and to mankind period. Bourguiba decided to kill, to assassinate 13 Tunisians (...)."

Georges Sarre, French Socialist and deputy in the European Parliament, told us the following: "I took the step, 3 days ago, of submitting to the European Parliament a resolution aimed at making an appeal to President Bourguiba in favor of clemency. Unfortunately, Bourguiba refused to heed our appeal. For our part, we are all the more moved because every time a man dies a violent death, we regard it as something dramatic. We believe that Bourguiba's regime, which is a repressive, intolerant government, is coming to an end in a river of blood."

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TUNISIA

TUNISIAN OPPOSITION INDIGNANT OVER EXECUTION OF GAFSA ATTACKERS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 28 Apr 80 p 17

[Text] On the evening of 17 April, three political groups in opposition to the Bourguiba regime published statements expressing their indignation. Labeling the executions as assassinations, the Tunisian National Opposition Movement (MONT), led by Ibrahim Tobal, claims that the executions took place the evening before--that is, on Wednesday, 16 April, "which proves once more that Bourguiba's government had to act as is its wont, by stealth, as criminals do." MONT salutes the memory of the 13 martyrs of Gafsa, whose names "join the long list of martyrs of the national opposition, such as Salah Ben Youssef, Major Zallaq, Hocine el-Hadj, and others."

Their sacrifice, MONT adds, "will fuel the relentless struggle which all Tunisian progressive and patriotic forces must unite to wage in order to defeat this merciless, bloodthirsty regime."

For its part, the Popular Unity Movement (MUP), led by Ahmed Ben Saltah, condemns "the violence of this regime," which "is the cause of the events in Gafsa and those of 26 January 1978."

It adds: "Disregarding the people's aspirations, deaf to the anguish of young people and the workers, counting only on the violence and the protection of foreigners, the Tunisian regime has once again defied the great majority of the Tunisian people." It emphasizes, however: "No! to the use of violence (...). The Tunisian people may one day forget, but they will never forgive. It will be up to the Tunisian people, to the youth of Tunisia, to learn the lessons from the grave events that have repeated themselves over these many years," the MUP continues.

Another violent reaction came from the Tunisian People's Revolutionary Party (PRPT), many of whose leaders including Zine el-Abidine and Medkouni, are being held in Tunisia.

Briefly recalling the bloody repression that has prevailed since 1956 and for which "the machinery was established by France at the cost of another bloodbath," the PRPT salutes the memory of "the 13 revolutionary soldiers."

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It states that "the Tunisian national progressive movement must be clear-headed and united in meeting this new test imposed by a fascist regime. There can be no hesitation; no use of the blood spilled at Gafsa will be permitted.

Lastly, Tunisian communists in France denounce what they describe as "this heinous crime" which "cannot fail to strike at the conscience of all those who continued to believe that the massacres of 26 January 1978 were but an accident by a regime that could still mend its ways, and who also continued to believe, influenced by a mystified and mystifying opposition, that Bourguiba might still be a man capable of a gesture in keeping with the situation."

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