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Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 28/82)

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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CONTENTS

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- Informed Sources on Nonaligned Meeting Results
(Thomas Thomson; REUTER, 17 Jul 82) 1

INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

- Conditions for Possible PLO-Washington Dialogue
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 4-10 Jun 82) 2

IRAN

- Mullahs' War Plans, Social Controls Outlined
(THE ECONOMIST, 17 Jul 82) 8
- The Avengers of Karbala
How the Mullahs Do It

IRAQ

- Interview with RCC Member Tariq 'Aziz
(Iraq Tariq 'Aziz Interview; AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI
4-10 Jun 82) 12
- Speculation on Next Phase of Iraq-Iran War
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 28 May-3 Jun 82) 18

JORDAN

- Interview With Jordan's Foreign Minister on Policy Issues
(Marwan Qasim Interview; AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI,
4-10 Jun 82) 20

- a -

[III - NE & A - 121 FOUO]

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LEBANON

Effect of Invasion on Elections Examined
(AL-WARAN AL-'ARABI, 11-17 Jun 82) 26

LIBYA

Spain Suspends Its Import Payments
(MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS, 9 Jul 82) 29

SYRIA

Muslim Brotherhood Leader on Hamah, Country's Armed Forces
('Adnan Sa 'd al-Din Interview; AL-WATAN
AL-'ARABI, 16-22 Apr 82) 30

- b -

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

INFORMED SOURCES ON NONALIGNED MEETING RESULTS

JN170110 London REUTER in English 0030 GMT 17 Jul 82

[Report by Thomas Thomson]

[Excerpt] Nicosia, 17 Jul (REUTER)--Nonaligned nations winding up emergency talks today on the Lebanese crisis will criticise the United States for supporting Israel but invite Washington to help in solving the plight of Palestinians, informed conference sources said.

A communique to be issued by the 60 or so countries attending the meeting to consider how to aid Palestinians trapped by Israeli troops in west Beirut would also urge a political and economic boycott of the Jewish state, they said.

A formula for criticising the United States was hammered out after many hours of private negotiations. Radical states including Syria, Algeria, Iran and Cuba, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PL) sought to denounce the United States, the sources said. But others, including Egypt, Jordan and Oman, wanted no reference to the United States.

The sources said the meeting was also moving last night towards approving a proposal to send a delegation of foreign ministers to Beirut, just 150 miles [word indistinct] away across the Mediterranean.

The sources said the nonaligned nations were also considering the merits of sending a mission to the capitals of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to argue the case of the Palestinians but no final decision had been taken by last night.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

CONDITIONS FOR POSSIBLE PLO-WASHINGTON DIALOGUE

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 277, 4-10 Jun 82 pp 30-31

[Article: "The Conditions for a Dialogue Between Washington and the PLO"]

[Text] AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI is following up the publication of the investigation it started last issue into the "substance" of the directions of the policy of the Reagan Administration toward resolving the Middle East crisis and its subsidiary problems. At the forefront is the issue of the acceptable basis for an American dialogue with the PLO in light of America's written commitment to Israel, made in 1975, not to negotiate with the PLO unless the latter substantively modifies its charter with regard to the future of Israel, i.e., unless it accepts the principle of recognition of the establishment of the State of Israel and its right to exist, as well as Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

What is the real position of the United States? Are there ongoing communications in public and in private? What are they?

Washington - AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI Bureau

In his speech before the Council on World Affairs in Chicago in the middle of last week, U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig maintained silence over the matter of resolving the problem of American relations with the PLO. At the same time he was quick to confirm that America was taking speedy action to resolve the Lebanese problem, and the problem of the autonomy discussions, whereas everyone is agreed that no realistic solution can ignore the PLO at any basic or subsidiary level of the Middle East problem.

In this matter there are certain cryptic codes.

However, the dialogue that ensued between Lee H. Hamilton, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee for Europe and the Middle East of the House of Representatives, and Nicholas Veliotis, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, in the course of their testimony before the Committee, has shed some light which helps clarify some of the secret aspects of the "codes":

Hamilton: Let me move now to the PLO issue. Does the present administration (the Reagan Administration) support and affirm the 1975 agreement?

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Veliotis: Yes, Mr President.

Hamilton: What is your understanding of the nature of that agreement exactly, insofar as it relates to our dealing with the PLO?

Veliotis: In clearly defined language, it means that we will not recognize or negotiate with it.

Hamilton: But can we speak to its officials?

Veliotis: As a general rule, no. But there have been exceptions, as we have seen.

Hamilton: If the agreement (the 1975 agreement) concerns only negotiations and recognition, then why can't we talk to them (with officials of the PLO)?

Veliotis: At the beginning of President Carter's term a decision was taken to interpret the 1975 agreement as comprehensive, except for certain limited exceptions not relating to the issue of peace, i.e., that each decision be made on a case-by-case basis.

Hamilton: Therefore, this policy is not limited to recognition or negotiation, but is a policy predicated on the basis that we are forbidden from speaking with the PLO?

Veliotis: That is the way the agreement was interpreted.

Hamilton: By whom was it interpreted in this way?

Veliotis: By two successive administrations (the Johnson Administration and the Carter Administration).

Hamilton: Does that include the current administration?

Veliotis: That includes the current administration.

Hamilton: Can we conclude in brief that the wording of the agreement's text gives Israel the right to veto any (American) dealing with Israel? In this regard I quote the following from the text of the agreement.

"The United States promises to consult fully with the Government of Israel and to coordinate with it at the level of this issue its position and its strategy in the Geneva Peace Conference.

Veliotis: Not at all. It means that in light of our promise to Israel we will not deal with the PLO until such time as the requisite conditions are met. Mr Chairman, I think that it is important to note that we are bound to a commitment to Israel. Ever since we made that pledge--which is now public--it has been regarded as an American proposal to the PLO which the latter may accept if it wishes.

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Hamilton: Don't you accept the argument that the PLO is a powerful party to the Middle East crisis?

Veliotis: Yes, sir.

Hamilton: Does the United States enjoy flexibility or freedom of movement in deciding on and implementing new or different policies regarding the PLO?

Veliotis: Presumably, we are free to do as we wish, as an independent and sovereign state. However, I do believe that our words acknowledge that those commitments and pledges are important to Israel, just as other parties in the Middle East enjoy great importance in light of the confidence demanded by the situation, especially confidence in us (the United States).

Hamilton: Are we currently attempting to clarify or modify any of the PLO's views through third parties?

Veliotis: There is what I would call an on-going process, because there is an unlimited number of volunteer mediators carrying messages back and forth. This process has been going on since 1975.

Hamilton: If we had a message that we would like to send to Yasir 'Arafat, could we do so?

Veliotis: Certainly.

Hamilton: And if he had a message that he would like to send to us, could he do so?

Veliotis: There would be no problem.

Hamilton: Are we presently communicating with any Palestinian officials?

Veliotis: Palestinian officials?

Hamilton: Officials of the PLO, for example?

Veliotis: PLO officials? Certainly not. There is nothing of that sort happening in the normal course of negotiations. However, as you know there is some contact relating to security. And I would like to leave the matter there.

But allow me to clear up things concerning the exchange of messages. The situation is as follows: A man or woman comes up and says that he or she is a contact. On this basis one or both of them says that the PLO would like to talk to us. Our answer to this is: "That's great! That is our policy."

Conditions for Negotiation

At this point, Rep. Stephen Solarz (N.Y.) enters the debate and talks with Veliotis:

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Solarz: If the PLO were to accept all of the conditions which we placed in the 1975 agreement (with Israel), granting Israel the right to exist, accepting Resolutions 242 and 338, then from our part could we begin serious negotiations with the PLO? Or, do we have the right to insist (and I believe President Reagan said that it is our right when he was campaigning for president) that the Palestinians give up terrorism as a condition for our country's preparedness to negotiate with them?

Veliotis: In my own understanding, if the PLO decides to meet the above-mentioned conditions, then we will have the right to start a dialogue with it. But if it chooses not to forsake the use of terror before that time, it will be precisely that which I will recommend to them in order for them to occupy first priority on the proposed agenda for negotiations.

Solarz: Let me mention here the conversation that took place between myself and King Hassan II of Morocco. The King told me that President Carter had asked him to inform Yasir 'Arafat that as soon as he accepts Israel's right to exist, as stipulated in Resolutions 242 and 338, President Carter would invite him to breakfast at the White House the very next day.

I would like to know if you gentlemen have any other explanation for Yasir 'Arafat's continued refusal to recognize Israel's existence and to accept Resolution 242, thereby foregoing an American breakfast?

Isn't it true that the PLO which 'Arafat represents unwilling to recognize Israel's right to exist because it really wants to establish a Palestinian state, not only in the West Bank and Gaza, but in all of the land ruled by Israel?

Doesn't 'Arafat feel that if he were to accept the American conditions then he would be recalled immediately from his position of leadership in the PLO?

Veliotis: It would be very difficult for me to speak confidently about what Mr Yassir 'Arafat thinks. I have never spoken with him.

Solarz: How do you explain their refusal of the conditions? Isn't it very clear, after all, that it is a nation's right to be recognized, a nation that is a member of the UN and already recognized in most parts of the world?

Veliotis: I am unable to evince any more than what we do know about the PLO's position. We understand that it feels that recognition of Israel, in this form or any other, is the last card that the PLO has to play. Therefore, this card will only be used during or after negotiations.

Our view has been clearly expressed privately and publicly on several occasions. It is that this card is the first card to be played by any party desiring to enter seriously into the peace process.

The Final Question

At another point, Rep Toby Roth (Wisc.) entered into the testimony:

Roth: I have two questions concerning the PLO which I would like to address to Mr Veliotis: Do you think that it was appropriate (diplomatically) for two former American presidents to make statements like Carter and Ford did after al-Sadat's funeral on the necessity for dealing with the PLO?

The other question is:

The Soviets have recently recognized the PLO. Does that change the situation in any way?

Veliotis: To answer the last question first, I would say: no, it doesn't change anything. Soviet recognition of the PLO is a kind of official veil over a situation that has been going on for a long time. They are telling the PLO: You now have diplomatic status. In Moscow they have been receiving 'Arafat and other high Palestinian officials for years, treating each one as a head of state. But as far as American policy is concerned, this kind of recognition of the PLO, or any other political recognition, must come after and not before the PLO demonstrates its willingness to accept the premises of the "peace game."

This is the significance of the wording of Resolutions 242 and 338.

As for the statements of former presidents Ford and Carter, I believe that, despite the publicity given to these statements, the former presidents will refrain from interfering in our political life any more deeply, because their views are only their own individual views. In any case, I don't believe that I can comment on whether or not it was appropriate to comment on the PLO. That is their business as ordinary citizens.

The De Facto Truce

After that, incidentally, came the developments whose practical outcome was the "the real and worrisome truce" achieved by American envoy Phillip Habib between the three parties: Syria, Israel, and the PLO.

This truce is not supported by any written agreement. Phillip Habib transmitted verbal messages between the three parties. These "verbal" messages do not commit anyone to their contents...nor would they do so even if they were written.

This truce was able to withstand an important trial last month when Israel amassed 25,000 troops to carry out a sweep over southern Lebanon. It aims at destroying the nervous system of the PLO's infrastructure. However, the carrot-and-stick approach used by America with Israel, in addition to the responsible stance taken by the PLO by upholding its commitments and then by meeting the Israeli challenge, led to an easing of a crisis that could have had unforeseeable results, and uncontrollable repercussions.

Observers in Washington see the PLO as having supported the de facto truce achieved by Phillip Habib as a political weapon in their hands. This truce

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contains clear recognition of the PLO on the part of the U.S. and Israel as a fact that cannot be ignored and as a main party to anything relating to aspects of the Palestinian issue.

It is in light of this that informed circles in Washington understand the reasons why the PLO adheres to the truce and are anxious not to be the ones to violate it on the Israeli-Lebanese borders.

In any case, observance of this "worrisome truce" is going to be one of Mr Habib's concerns in his upcoming mission, so that the Lebanese house may be put in order in an acceptable manner until the conditions are created for detaching the Lebanese crisis from the Middle East problem. Or, until such time that an acceptable formula can be found to solve the problem of the future of the West Bank and Gaza, and the future of any comprehensive plan to resolve all of the aspects of the Middle East problem that all parties agree to. Might this formula be based on Prince Fahd's plan that might soon be put into motion?

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IRAN

MULLAHS' WAR PLANS, SOCIAL CONTROLS OUTLINED

The Avengers of Karbala

London THE ECONOMIST in English No 7246, 17 Jul 82 pp 29, 30

[Text] The historic tragedy of Shia Islam was the massacre in AD 680 of the forces of Hussein, the Prophet's grandson, at Karbala, 50 miles south of Baghdad. Iran's Shias are now getting their chance of revenge. On July 12th, Teheran radio announced that "the sons of Khomeini have now gone to the front with the intention of occupying Karbala". According to the broadcast, a "great and historic battle" was about to take place which would result in the overthrow of Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

The battle began on Tuesday night. Iranian troops advanced into Iraq north of the once-bustling port of Basra on a front some 10 kilometres wide. The Iraqis claimed to have stopped the invaders; their aircraft bombed several Iranian cities, including Kermanshah.

The Iraqis finally withdrew from Iranian territory to their own border last month, after suffering a series of defeats in the war they started in 1980. American reconnaissance photographs suggest that since then the Iranians have moved eight divisions down to the area north-east of Basra, bringing the size of their army in that sector to more than 100,000 men. Basra, which is directly across the Shatt al Arab waterway from the shattered Iranian cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, has been under heavy shelling over the past week. The push to capture the city involves crossing marshy land north of the Shatt al Arab (and just south of the supposed site of the Garden of Eden in ancient Mesopotamia).

The Iraqis' withdrawal from the high ground they had previously occupied inside Iran exposed to attack hundreds of square kilometres of Iraqi territory on this front. They now appear to be trying to make a stand at the base of a line of hills well inside their own territory, which joins up with their defences in the flat country north of Basra.

Until last weekend, Iran still seemed to be in doubt whether to move into Iraq. Hashem Rafsanjani, the speaker of Iran's parliament, told crowds at the Friday prayer meeting that unless Iraq paid reparations for the war "we shall draw the money out of its throat", and threatened that Iranian forces would shell Baghdad. Iran's official terms for ending the war are the payment of \$150 billion in reparations, condemnation of the Iraqi "aggressor" by an international tribunal, and the return of 100,000 Iraqi Shias expelled to Iran before the war began.

Many senior mullahs are pressing for a full-scale invasion to overthrow Mr Saddam Hussein and set up a Shia Islamic republic in Iraq. Ayatollah Khomeini's probable successor, Ayatollah Hossein Montazeri, has urged that an Islamic army of 20m people go forth to "liberate" both Iraq and Palestine.

The Iraqis, this time, may be able to stop the Iranians. Their soldiers are likely to fight better to defend their own country than they did in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini has called on the Shia half of Iran's population to rebel but so far the Shias in Iraq's army have fought as well as, or no worse than, the Sunnis. And Mr Saddam Hussein's grip on power has if anything tightened since the threat of invasion became real. Half the members of Iraq's ruling Revolution Command

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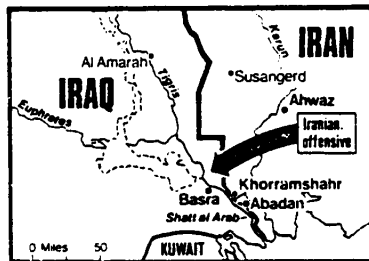
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Council have been purged since it issued the order—at first apparently without the president's consent—for Iraqi forces to withdraw from Iran.

Neither Iraq's army nor Iran's is starved for spare parts. After an early moratorium on arms supplies from most foreign sources, a flow has been reaching both countries. The French and the Italians have been supplying the Iraqis, who have also had arms from Bulgaria and Poland. The Israelis have helped the Iranians with parts for their American-made tanks and aircraft. Other equipment has reached Iran from a curious variety of other countries, some of it flown over the Soviet Union with Soviet permission.

A major Iranian attack along the border could damage the Iraqi oilfields strung out along it, and further reduce Iraq's oil exports, now running at less than 700,000 barrels a day through the country's sole remaining outlet, the pipeline across Turkey. Iranian oil production may now be as high as 2.2m barrels a day, and the Iranians say they want to raise it



to around 3m barrels a day. Iranian oil installations could, however, be vulnerable to Iraqi air attack.

The Iranians are using their newly displayed military strength in an attempt to bludgeon the oil states of the Gulf, and Saudi Arabia in particular, to produce less oil. The conservative Gulf sheikhdoms are thoroughly alarmed by this turn of events. Their fears may lead them to

look towards the United States, despite America's reluctance to criticise Israel's attack on the PLO in Lebanon. The Americans are worried lest western support for the Gulf states and Iraq cause Iran to look for more backing from the Soviet Union. Yet the alternative may be to leave the shaky monarchies of the Gulf at the mercy of unpredictable Iran.

How the Mullahs Do It

London THE ECONOMIST in English No 7246, 17 Jul 82 p 30

[Text] Young revolutionary guards still take to the streets of Teheran at dusk every day. But their war against the left-wing Mujaheddin guerrillas may be almost won. The recent assassination of a senior ayatollah in Yazd by a man with a grenade who clung to him was an exceptional feat for an opposition group which a year ago appeared to be picking off members of the leadership at will. Since then thousands of Mujaheddin and their sympathisers have been tracked down, imprisoned and in many cases tortured and shot. Iranian exiles allege that there are some 40,000 political prisoners in Iran, and that some 8,000 people have been executed over the past year.

The middle classes have been watching with horror as the mullahs have consolidated their rule. Discontented intellectuals who helped to launch the campaign that overthrew the Shah are now being shown that they have no role to play in shaping the new Iran. Power rests on the support of largely illiterate masses, who turn out in hundreds of thousands at government-organised rallies. Their puritanical Islamic values are being stamped on the country.

The revolutionary guards and local committees of teenage vigilantes are ensuring that all citizens observe a strictly Islamic way of life. Armed intruders make spot checks on private homes searching for alcohol, decadent literature, western pop music and video cassette machines. They also make sure that the swimming pools of the rich are kept empty to comply with a recent ban on the sport. If a hidden bottle of Scotch is discovered, the unlucky hoarder can expect to be lashed; for less offensive luxuries he may be fined or simply warned.

An Islamic veil is descending on women. Only a year ago wearing Islamic clothing was still voluntary. Now no woman would dare show herself without covering her head and limbs. Women

workers are ordered to appear either in the full-length chador or one of the Mao-type trouser costumes which have replaced dresses and jeans in boutiques and stores. University graduates report that female staff are gradually being ousted from important jobs and limited to secretarial roles. Some mullahs are demanding that women should not be allowed to venture outside their homes.

The purge of officials and experts who served under the Shah is continuing and thousands of them cannot find work. The secret police are also becoming more active. "It's not just the Mujaheddin who are taken away in the night," said one Teheran teacher. "In many ways it's more frightening than under the Shah because you don't know whom they're going to pick on next."

Most factories are still working at only a fraction of their capacity. But the government says it is committed to complete the grandiose industrialisation projects of the Shah, if at a more leisurely pace. The recent boost in oil exports is at last providing the capital to fulfil those aims. Western traders say that business with the government is booming. Oil earnings have also been used to relieve

chronic food shortages through imports. With meat rationed at 700 grammes per month for a married couple and butter and eggs almost unavailable, there was a growing risk that people would take to the streets out of sheer hunger.

With the Mujaheddin hard hit, the only organisation which seems in the least capable of stopping the mullahs is the army. The victory over Iraq has enabled the army to reassert some of its independence. Officers make little attempt to conceal their disdain for the chaotic rule of the clerics. But few people believe that the army will be in a position to mount a political challenge for many years to come. Loyal Islamic believers have been promoted to stand

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between officers and men. And wherever the army is stationed, equally large forces of fanatically loyal revolutionary guards keep a wary eye on the troops.

"Once the war with Iraq is over, they'll send the army up into Kurdistan, which is completely out of the government's control," one young officer said. "That will keep us busy and out of the way for a couple of years."

Teheran and other major cities present a morose picture. Building complexes started by the Shah are left unfinished, shops are boarded up or empty. Among the middle classes and those in the service industries there is an almost tearful nostalgia for the days of the Shah, now remembered as a time of plenty. It can sometimes take comic forms. A waiter serving a German businessman in the Hotel Intercontinental was distressed when his customer complained that his steak smelt and tasted awful. "But, sir, it's the best we've got. We imported it before the revolution."

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IRAQ

INTERVIEW WITH RCC MEMBER TARIQ 'AZIZ

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 277, 4-10 Jun 82 pp 20-22

[Interview with Vice President of Iraq Tariq 'Aziz by Walid Abu Dhahr in Baghdad: "Final Calculations: Victory for Iraq"; date not specified]

[Text] From the battlefield to the centers of decision-making AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has followed the Iraqi-Iranian war week after week. The latest developments in the battlefield took Walid Abu Dhahr to Baghdad for an elucidation of the situation on the Iraqi and Arab levels and to communicate the Iraqi leadership's expectations in the forthcoming phase.

This interview with Iraqi Vice President Tariq 'Aziz, and member of the Revolutionary Command Council, disclosed these expectations and spells out this critical moment after Iraq's withdrawal from al-Muhammara [Khorramshahr]. He also focuses on the prevailing tripartite alliance between al-Asad, Khomeyni, and Begin, and the suspicious behavior of the Qadhdhafi regime towards Arab national interests.

Baghdad is still Baghdad, and Iraq is still the Iraq that perturbs its enemies and comforts its friends. This is the impression one gets upon landing in the Iraqi capital, interviewing the typical Iraqi, and meeting with any Iraqi official.

Iraqis, whether in positions of power and decision-making or in the battle-ditches, share a common faith hardened by experience and tempered by sacrifice. The battle has made it more resolute than ever. They believe in their own Arab man--this has never been so persistently repeated--is master of his own destiny and history.

Tariq 'Aziz, whose faith is embodied in his frankness and quiet manner, spoke trustingly to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI about everything. He had an interpretation of the near future that surpassed hasty judgments and was instead an elucidation of ultimate truths.

His words were meant to say that those who dream of an Iraqi defeat--even a small defeat--will go on dreaming for a long time before their dreams are shattered.

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[Question] What is the situation now on the Iraqi-Iranian front?

[Answer] The situation is as follows: Iraqi forces have withdrawn to the southern sector's international borders.

[Question] And the remaining Iraqi bases?

[Answer] The Iraqi forces are still present, in varying degrees of force, inside Iranian territories in the northern and central sectors, and in the northern part of the southern sector (ai-Shash-Dezful).

[Question] Certain quarters in the Western and Arab media that Iraq suffered a severe defeat after the battle of Khorramshahr. What do you say?

[Answer] Iraq was not defeated. Rather, it achieved the most outstanding victory in contemporary Arab history. Allow me to explain. Iraq did not seek out this war, nor did it begin it. Iran was the one that started the aggression. It began an attack on the nationalist and socialist regime of Iraq and called for its overthrow. For several months it engaged in deliberate provocations on bases and guard posts along the Iraqi border. It would occupy the Iraqi territory Zayn al-Qos and Sayf Sa'd. On 14 September 1980, from heavy artillery setup inside Iraqi territory, it shelled the towns of Khanaqin, Mandali, and Naft Khaneh. And for the first time in contemporary Arab history, an Arab army struck at an enemy occupying his land and attempting to expel him from it. Iraq then destroyed the enemy's military concentrations on its national borders and pursued the enemy tens of kilometers inside his land. The Iraqi army remained inside Iranian territory for over 29 months in defense of Iraq. It is still to be found in other parts of Iran that are very important from a strategic standpoint. So where is the defeat? At no time did we ever say that we desire to remain inside Iranian territory, just as we always said that we do not covet any Iranian land. From a position of strength we called for a peaceful and just settlement of the conflict. On 18 September 1980, when Iraqi columns were advancing into the heart of Iranian territory at every point, President Saddam Hussayn called for a ceasefire and a just settlement of the conflict. He plainly said, "We absolutely do not wish to humiliate the people and army of Iran." This was our position from the beginning, and it is our position today.

Our fighters remain inside Iranian territory for over 20 months, and we were able to achieve the greater part of our military objectives in battle, namely, the destruction of the enemy's military might, especially its technical appendages. The achievement of this objective ensures the security of Iran and the region, now and in the future. The truth will come out sooner or later that Iran no longer possesses an army capable of playing a major role in the region. The thrust of Iran's forces presently is in its Guards and its volunteers, which are only good for internal security and for psychological warfare inside Iranian territory. But they are incapable of forming a genuine army in the military conflicts going on outside Iran. Iran's air force, which was once the biggest air force in that region, has been destroyed. A large portion of its armored forces have been destroyed, as have Iranian artillery. Its naval power's importance has been diminished.

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Correspondingly, and despite the sacrifices made by Iraq in battle--which is only natural--Iraq managed to preserve every category within its armed forces, with its basic structure and striking force intact. Throughout the previous period of fighting, it was well known that the rate of Iraqi casualties was very low compared to the exceeding high Iranian casualty rate.

In the strategic balance-sheet of the conflict between expansionist Iran and Iraq and the Arab nation, Iraq was victorious, because it destroyed this expansionist drive's fighting machine.

The Threat...And Reality

[Question] But Iran continues to issue threats and says that it is a country with a population of 40 million, and that it is the greatest power in the region.

[Answer] Threats over the radio are one thing and reality is another. The ones making threats either have forgotten, or wish other people to forget, that they have been at war for over 20 months, and have lost great numbers of people and material, in order to regain only a part of their land, not all of it. Keep in mind that the ones fighting in his own land possesses greater advantages in terms of material and morale than those that fight outside their own land.

[Question] But how do you explain Iran's success in expelling Iraqi forces from its lands?

[Answer] Iraqi forces have withdrawn in certain instances from Iranian territory voluntarily and without fighting. In other instances, under orders from the general command, they withdrew under fire, i.e., while inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. They would withdraw because our objective is not to hold onto land but to destroy the enemy's fighting machine that has expansionist tendencies towards our country. And every time our forces engaged in battle in this fashion, they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

In the al-Shash-Dezful battle, the enemy lost over 30,000 men. Our own human losses were much lower. And if Iran took a number of prisoners, this doesn't mean it scored a victory. In World War II there were large numbers of prisoners taken by both sides, whether they had won or lost. The evaluation of the success or failure of any battle depends upon the final outcome, i.e., the calculation of all categories of casualties (dead; wounded; prisoners), equipment and territory. In that case, we cannot term Iraq's withdrawal from Iranian territory itself a "defeat," because Iraq as I said is not intent on holding land. We must remember a basic truth in these battles, and that is that the Iraqi fighter was fighting in a land which his commanders reminded him daily was not his own, and which he would abandon upon arrival at a peaceful settlement. Whereas the Iranian fighter was fighting on his own lands, and his lines of supply passed directly over his own lands. He was fighting to regain land that belonged to him. Despite this very important difference in the two cases, the Iraqi fighters did not give up the land easily. They fought for it bravely, and inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy.

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Iran is three times as great as Iraq in area and population. But despite this, for more than 20 months the battle was conducted on Iranian territory, not Iraqi. Does this mean that Iran is "superior"? It indicates a clear and qualitative Iraqi "superiority" the like of which contemporary Arab history has never seen.

Those who applaud Iran's alleged victories in this war do so out of a complex over their own defeats. Hafiz al-Asad, who surrendered the Golan Heights without a fight in 1967 when he was defense minister, who couldn't fight for more than two weeks in 1973, and whose forces retreated at the end of that battle while he was president, is unable to look Iraq's victories in the eye:

First: Iraq was able to continue the war for more than 20 months, despite conditions of international encirclement and conspiracy by certain Arab regimes. At the same time Iraq succeeded in maintaining its prosperity and its economic and cultural development.

Second: Iraq was successful in carrying the battle to enemy territory and was able to hold on to it the entire time, which is exceptional among even armed conflicts that crop up between those countries considered superpowers in the world.

Hafiz al-Asad cannot face these truths. Along with those various Arabs whom he mortgaged to the Iranian regime, and who stabbed Iraq in the back, he is attempting to depict the results of the battles as an Iranian "victory."

[Question] Do you expect Iranian forces to enter Iraqi territory?

[Answer] The war was started because Iranian forces were occupying Iraqi territory, and because it placed its artillery there and shelled our cities. At that time, the Iranian regime was concentrating its forces along our border. Its defense minister, Fakuri, was threatening to wipe Iraq off the map. That meant that they were planning to invade Iraq and append it to Iran. They thought that they were capable of doing so. But now we have no doubt that the rulers of Tehran still harbor those intentions, but they also now realize what it means to attack Iraq. They know the price they paid when they fought Iraq on Iranian territory. Therefore, the matter is not commensurate with intentions, for the intentions of the rulers of Tehran are well known. There are no illusions about them. The matter is commensurate with the rulers of Tehran and their friends among Arab traitors, on the basis of power, costs, and the Arab and international reaction. If you hear them say that they will not cross the international border, you can be sure that they have deduced that any action of this sort will lead to a real tragedy for them.

[Question] What do you think the reaction of the Arab governments will be if the Iranians attempt to cross the Iraqi border?

[Answer] When the war with Iran started, we said that this case should call into effect the principles of the Arab Mutual Defense Pact, and the principle of a common Arab destiny. It was incumbent upon the Arab governments to stand alongside Iraq in an official manner and with all available means. But

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some said that Iraq was inside Iranian territory, and that this was a different case because the Arabs have always confronted an occupation by others of Arab lands. Perhaps this was the first time the Arabs found themselves confronting a situation where Arab forces were confronting the enemy and fighting him in his own land in self-defense against certain aggression.

In any case, we don't want to argue the matter. It is not a legal matter, but a political position. This is because certain Arab states knew from the start that it is their duty to stand alongside Iraq publicly. Certain other Arab states took Iran's side in a barefaced manner. This latter position has no legal justification in either the Arab League's Charter or in the Arab Mutual Defense Pact. It is likewise a political position. But should Iran try to cross the Iraqi border, then the legal aspect would be completely clear. For this reason, and for political reasons also, we expect that the majority of Arabs would support Iraq in its battle according to the provisions of the Arab Mutual Defense Pact.

[Question] What results do you expect from the statements by the Zionist enemy's Defense Minister Sharon toward arms cooperation between the rulers of Tehran and Tel Aviv?

[Answer] The arms cooperation between Tel Aviv and Tehran is nothing new. This scandal was exposed with the crash of the Argentine airplane on 18 June 1981. News of this matter was broadcast in journalistic circles all over the world. Previous statements on the subject had been issued from Zionist sources. Rafsanjani once admitted that they fought arms from Israel in return for past debts. Despite all of this information, Hafiz al-Asad's regime denied it and defended the Iranians. But now Sharon's statements are official and direct and cannot be denied. Now the argument revolves around whether or not America knew about it. But there is no argument about the truth of arms cooperation between Tel Aviv and Tehran.

The disclosure of the truth in this way totally exposes the al-Asad-Khomeyni-Begin alliance against Arab nationalism. It also exposes the suspicious behavior of the Qadhdhafi regime, that plays mysterious roles on the Arab level, and the ultimate conclusion that it is against Arab nationalism and the Arab entity.

We do not believe that the Syrian and Libyan regimes are going to change their stances, because they are not unaware of these truths. They are in secret collusion. These sorts, even if it hurts them to have the truth exposed, will nevertheless not change their real position even if they do engage in maneuvering. What is important about these statements is the extent to which it affects other Arabs who were deceived by Khomeyni, who said he was a friend and that he might ally himself with the Arabs against Zionism. If the disclosure of these truths makes the Arabs have a qualitative change in their positions, then that is a gain for nationalism and will clear up the situation. We hope so. But if they are silent and do not take action in light of these truths, as every loyal Arab should, then this signifies many things to us which we will have to confront in time. But we are confident that the vast

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majority of the Arab Nation who sympathized with Iraq in its battle, and who considered it from the beginning to be a nationalist battle, will find in these truths support for Iraq's position and an explanation of the suspicious behavior of the others.

The room for lies and deceit is not very large, and truth will come out. It has been exposed. Thank God.

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IRAQ

SPECULATION ON NEXT PHASE OF IRAQ-IRAN WAR

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 276, 28 May - 3 Jun 82 pp 21-22

[Article: "Iraq's Wagers in the New Phase"]

[Text] The latest developments in the Iraq-Iran war are not, for the time being, in Iraq's favor. They may be explained in light of the basic options of the Iraqi leadership. These options are wary of becoming the pawns of superpower interests and of providing gradually a pretext for their direct intervention in the Gulf. Although the heated explanations of what is happening on the battlefield do not lend themselves to calm interpretation, this quick report from Baghdad may help to shed light on the situation.

The current phase of the Iraq-Iran war is considered, by virtue of its scope and sheer military scale, to be a test for the Arabs and their ability to distinguish their link to issues of common destiny. At the same time, it is a test for the capability of the Iraqi armed forces to plunge into war, alone, for 2 years, for the sake of all Arabs.

The Iraqi response to unwarranted Iranian provocations has led inescapably to armed confrontation, taking the form of open war with Iran. In the estimation of Iraqi political leaders and military, the war is not a "romantic frolic under the light of the moon." The two, united political and military leaderships realize that they face a strong opponent with huge material and human resources; Iran's population is four times that of Iraq. But the root of the matter does not lie in numbers. There is the factor of military efficiency, and other factors such as the responses of the various parties directly or indirectly concerned with the war and its outcome. All of these factors are vital.

From the start, the Iraqi forces demonstrated by training, arms, and absorption of effective fighting techniques, this ability to obtain quick, even magnificent, results--in a manner which reminded military analysts of a blitzkriegs.

It was these spectacular results which drew the Arabs away from the position of enthusiastic on-looker to one of actual partnership, giving the battle the nature of common, nationalist struggle, and letting Iran know that it cannot simply single Iraq out. Nor can it do so with any Arab state. The world has learned that the Arabs know very well that it is a common battle and a common destiny in a region that comprises the first line of defense of Arab oil wealth, the new Arab power base in the world.

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Participation...and High Hopes

However, effective Arab participation on the front has left much room for raised hopes by some. On the periphery of importance, the Syrian and Libyan regimes played a role in stabbing in the back the Arab front in the Iraq-Iran war.

Previously there had been no need to announce the news that in the first phase Iraqi forces could have occupied Abadan and Kharg Island. It did not do so because this in turn would have exposed the very heart of Iraq to the danger of allied American-Soviet intervention against Iraq. The Iraqi leadership accomplished the impossible by curbing the recalcitrance of its Iraqi forces [who wished to push into Iran]. But Iraq did not wish to start a world war, it only wanted to demonstrate and emphasize the Arab right to Shatt al-'Arab. And it really did.

Regardless of what is happening now on the front, one indisputable truth remains: Iraqi military steadfastness is a living legend, and it will transform the Iraqi border and territories into a graveyard for invaders. It does not matter whether the Arabs join in the fateful battle or remain for the most part merely spectators, looking and sighing at the fateful battle.

What Now?

Clearly, the Western media's focus on the size of what it terms the latest Iranian victories" in the southern sector (al-Muhammara) hardly had the same enthusiasm 20 months ago when Iraq was scoring victory after victory, every day, in the heart of Iran. There is no need to explain this enthusiasm, since the Zionist sources that direct the media are more than well known.

Naturally one may ask about forthcoming military developments, and whether the Iraqi leadership really desires to expand inside Iran in the near future. The decisions taken in days to come will determine the outcome for Iraq and the Arab World.

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JORDAN

INTERVIEW WITH JORDAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER ON POLICY ISSUES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 277, 4-10 Jun 82 pp 28-29

[Interview with Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marwan Qasim by Florence Ra'd in Amman: "The Fahd Initiative has Become an Arab Initiative"; date not specified]

[Text] Jordan continues to be the key to the new diplomatic phase in the region. It has become essential now to secure Jordan's stance on matters. How does Jordan view phase following the Sinai evacuation...and the latest developments in the Iraq-Iran war and conditions on the West Bank? What is Amman's position toward Damascus, and the reconvening of the Fez summit? How may be described Jordan-American relations at this point?

These and other questions were responded to by Mr Marwan Qasim, Jordan's Foreign Minister, in an interview with AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI. We met with him before his trip to Havana and after his return from Morocco.

[Question] 25 April was a turning point between Camp David and the future. How does Jordan picture the phase following 25 April?

[Answer] We consider the Palestinian issue to be the major problem in the region. It can only be resolved upon the guarantee of a complete Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, and upon the Palestinian people securing its legitimate rights, particularly its rights to self-determination.

Jordan's position toward Camp Davis is well known. It ignores the main issue and the rights of the Palestinian people. Jordan was hoping for a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian issue, since it constitutes the main problem, whereupon it would become easily to settle the other, subsidiary problems. Nevertheless, I don't believe that there is any Arab state or party that objects to another Arab state reconquering its own occupied territory within the confines of its commitment to the welfare and national rights of the Arab nation, inasmuch this doesn't prejudice the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in determining its own future on its own national soil.

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What is required at this point is focusing on regaining occupied Arab lands and securing Palestinian rights. This will only be achieved with a strong and cohesive Arab position, balanced by a responsible international position. The latter entails that the superpowers, especially those with influence over Israel, carry out their responsibility to implement the will of the international community as represented by the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council pertaining to this issue.

[Question] The Prince Fahd plan is still proposed. Does Jordan regard it as a starting point in the research for a just peace in the near future?

[Answer] Actually, the Prince Fahd Peace Plan is not the first responsible Arab initiative in the effort to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region. Previously, in the Baghdad summit conference, the Arab states combined took the initiative and proposed the foundations for the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem. These foundations were defined as being conditional on the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all of the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, and the guarantee of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination on its own national soil. Our acceptance of this initiative, issued by Prince Fahd, was based on our mutual agreement in the Baghdad summit to most of the principles that the Palestinian thinking manifested in the plan of Mr Khaled al-Hassan, head of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Palestine National Congress, presented before the international symposium on the unchanging rights of the Palestinian people, convened a few days ago in Paris, meets with the Saudi principles, which became an Arab initiative upon its adoption by the majority of Arab states in the Fez summit conference.

[Question] Does Jordan expect Israel to annex the West Bank once and for all. Does it have a plan to abort this new scheme? What are its main directions?

[Answer] Israel's expansionist ambitions and Arab rights are no longer a secret to anyone in the world. Israel won't hesitate to carry out these ambitions one of these days. As for confronting these ambitions this is a matter that must be submitted to Arab considerations first and foremost. The matter of confrontation is a national issue not to be confined to Jordan alone. For this reason, Jordan has persisted in calling for the urgent agreement on a comprehensive Arab strategy for confronting Israel's expansionist ambitions, a strategy which could draw upon combined human, financial, economic, military and political energy and resources--in deed, not just in words. Responsibility would have to be shared. On this basis it would be possible to create a new Arab position and reality which Israel would be unable to confront or overcome.

[Question] The latest act of aggression on the al-Aqsa Mosque caused wide-ranging Arab and Islamic reactions. But no practical steps were taken to prevent any further possible attacks. What possible plan is there in this regard?

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[Answer] It is not possible to detach the issue of Jerusalem and the al-Aqsa Mosque from the prevailing issue in the region as a whole. As much as Jerusalem and the al-Aqsa Mosque are regarded as an Arab issue, they are also an Islamic issue that has top priority among Islamic issues. In all of its Arab and Islamic meetings, Jordan has been concerned to propose ideas relating to maintaining the steadfastness of the citizens of Jerusalem and to preventing the occupation authorities from attacking the holy places or changing the Arabic and Islamic character of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the prevention of possible attacks can only be accomplished through an agreed-upon, comprehensive strategy emitting from a united and cohesive Arabic and Islamic stand.

Iraq's Strength

[Question] How do you view the results of the latest battles on the Iraq-Iran front, and what are your expectations in the forthcoming stage?

[Answer] Iraq is waging a battle with Iran with complete faith that it is defending Arab rights ignored by Iran. In this battle Iraq is relying upon itself and upon the moral support given by its Arab brothers for whom it is fighting, despite the fact that there are some who have chosen to aid the enemy and abandon their brothers. Iraq is fighting to achieve certain ends that are not opposed to these others' self-interests and their dreams of influencing the destiny of the Arab nation. They are also providing dangerous opportunities for the two superpowers to benefit at the expense of the national welfare.

We must work sincerely to strengthen the Iraqi front and maintain its cohesiveness. Iraqi military might is also our might. We must confront the Iranian aggression despite what the Iranian regime and its allies in the region and abroad promote as propaganda. Jordan's support of Iraq stems from a position of principle. Jordan takes the same position on the issue of Palestine or of any other Arab land faced with aggression.

[Question] What is Jordan's position toward the Gulf states' coordination of military defense?

[Answer] Jordan was the first to point out the necessity for finding some kind of cooperation and coordination among the Gulf states in order to defend itself from any external ambitions. On more than one occasion we asserted that the task of defending the Gulf region is a responsibility of the Gulf states, especially after Iranian ambitions and threats were newly manifested in that region. In our estimation, the war that Iraq is fighting at present with Iran and with all of the other parties aiding Iran is nothing but an attempt by Iraq and its supportive parties to reach the Gulf states after overcoming Iraq as a principal power in the region carrying out its duty of defending the interests of the Arab nation against foreign threats.

[Question] Do you expect Israel to attack southern Lebanon, and what are the Arab and international conditions that would determine such an attack?

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[Answer] Israel's ambitions on the water and soil of Lebanon are very old, and continue to persist at present. They serve Israel's aims of expansion and hegemony. Israel is trying to create pretexts for reaching the waters' source in Lebanon and controlling it, even if there were no Palestinian presence or resistance there. Similarly, Israel avoids any public announcement of what its borders are. No one in the world today knows just which borders Israel wants recognized. The situation currently prevailing in Lebanon has aided Israel in reaching Lebanese waters and will facilitate complete control by Israel in the event of the success of those forces supporting Israel and helping it to partition Lebanon.

Hence, Arab efforts must be directed at rescuing Lebanon from the plot being hatched by Israel and at pulling it out of the situation it has fallen into. Several parties have worked continuously and persistently at fragmenting and partitioning of Lebanon and imposing their domination over it. Similarly, these parties along with certain Arab countries have provided Israel with one excuse after another to do as it pleases and implement what it wishes in Lebanon.

[Question] Jordan has announced that members of the Village League in the West Bank have been sentenced to death. Was this decision part of a larger plan for confrontation in coordination with the PLO, or was it an independent Jordanian decision?

[Answer] The application of Jordanian law to those adherents of the Village League or those cooperating with the occupation authorities is not new. The Jordanian government never ceased to apply it since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967. Several Jordanian sentences have been issued against those who have been proven to cooperate or to have sold real estate to the enemy. We are continuing to apply Jordanian law in the matter of the Village League because in our view the League constitutes a crime against the country.

These Jordanian measures were met with relief and with Arab support, and they don't imply that we are coordinating with anyone by implementing Jordanian law.

[Question] Do you expect the Fez conference to reconvene?

[Answer] We are confident that there will undoubtedly be an Arab meeting at the summit level so that all Arab countries may bear their historical responsibilities with respect to the events and dangers confronting the Arab nation. Similarly, there is no doubt that this meeting will take place in accordance with new premises which will enable the Arab leadership to take an historic decision to preserve the supreme national welfare and to guarantee that a united Arab stand will be reached. It will be a decision to guarantee that Arab rights are secured and the Arab character defended. Also, the absence of certain parties from the summit doesn't mean that the majority of Arabs will not bear their national responsibility with confidence and courage.

[Question] How would you describe Jordan's relations with the new American administration as compared with the Carter administration?

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[Answer] We hope that our relations with the American administration will be based on an understanding of our rights, our demands, and our fundamental needs. After His Majesty's recent visit to the United States, we found more understanding than in the past. We hope it will grow stronger in the future.

[Question] Has Jordan chosen once and for all to go with the Soviet missiles, or is it keeping up contact with the United States to buy the Hawk missiles?

[Answer] Jordan's defense needs are certain to be supplied by either side, because we are defending Jordan and the vital welfare of the Arab nation. These needs are subject to the particular conditions and events through which we are passing. We are concerned with strengthening our defense capability to the greatest extent possible. We will obtain arms from either side, despite efforts by Israel and its supporters in the Senate, led by Sen Kennedy, to prevent Jordan from obtaining advanced American weaponry. Similarly, certain other sides are unfortunately trying to sabotage Jordan's efforts to obtain advanced weaponry.

The Dangerous Harbinger

[Question] Do you believe that the wave of Khomeyniism presents a direct and genuine threat to the Arab Gulf States? Or is it on the verge of dying out?

[Answer] The attempts by Iraq and the Gulf States to build bridges of trust and good neighborliness with the new regime in Iran are well known. But the Khomeyni regime, in my opinion, is ignoring Iraq's initiative and its demand that the agreements concluded between the two parties be implemented. That regime persists in hatching plots and interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq and the Gulf states, just as it did recently in Bahrain. Similarly, the new regime in Iran refused to withdraw from the Iraqi positions determined in the treaties signed by the two countries. Instead it went even further by making threats to bring the region under its hegemony. In this way Iraq found itself forced to confront Iranian ambitions in defense of threatened Arab states and of the rights of itself and all of those who stood by Iraq. It had to stop Iran's expansion and its ambitions, despite the opportunism of local and international parties over the situation in attempting to weaken Iraq and control the Gulf region.

[Question] The summit conference of non-aligned nations will be held shortly in Baghdad. How does Jordan view this meeting, and how can it be employed in the service of the Arab cause?

[Answer] The convening of the non-alignment summit in Baghdad comes as an implementation of the non-alignment summit in Havana. There is no getting around it, despite the attempts by Iran and its allies to change the meeting place. Most of the countries in the non-aligned group are determined to attend the session in Baghdad. This session will help greatly in explaining the Arab cause to the greatest possible number of the world's countries. This session will be the starting point of international support for the

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central Arab issue, and support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It will be a clear inauguration of the isolation of Israel and all of the other enemies of the Arab nation.

[Question] Now that the Syrian-Iraqi border is closed, as well as the oil pipelines in Tripoli and Baniyas, how does Jordan view its relations with Syria?

[Answer] The latest Syrian measures against Iraq constitute, in our view, a dangerous harbinger that damages the national stance. They are regarded as a frank violation of Arab economic agreements, as well as a breaking of the Arab Mutual Defense Treaty. These measures are also regarded as well as a fragmentation of the principles and the national ideal that binds the Arab sister states and draws our people together. It is the responsibility of all the Arab states to forbid the Syrian regime from carrying out these measures. Jordan appraises its relations in the light of the supreme national welfare. On this basis, Jordan encourages and works with any Arab movement which calls the Arab states to the road of common national work and which forbids them continuing to side with the enemy in its aggression against Iraq and Arab rights.

[Question] Do you believe that Husni Mubarak is a continuation of al-Sadat, or is he an Egyptian president pursuing an independent course?

[Answer] We don't believe that Husni Mubarak is a continuation of al-Sadat. We evinced that from a number of his positions, the most prominent being his refusal to visit Jerusalem. Whereas it was easy for al-Sadat to visit Jerusalem. We hope that what he intends to do in the future will be within the limits we hopefully await.

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LEBANON

EFFECT OF INVASION ON ELECTIONS EXAMINED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 278, 11-17 Jun 82 pp 18, 19

[Article: "The Cards Are Being Shuffled in the Lebanese Presidential Campaign"]

[Text] What about the Lebanese presidential campaign, in the light of the Israeli invasion?

The political cards have been reshuffled, of course, and it will take some time to deal them again. However, there is a feeling that the "Syrian candidate" in the campaign has lost most of his cards and that new bets are being placed on a salvation candidate.

Before the recent aggression, efforts were being devoted to setting the date of the election and determining a quorum and requisite majority for the desired candidate. The official approach was that the elections should be held in July, provided that the date be announced after consultations with various parties.

Today the picture has changed completely, and the possibilities at issue are three in number:

A constitutional crisis embodied in a vacuum in the center of power.

A new plan, American probably, calling for an extension of [the term] of President Ilyas Sarkis.

A candidate suddenly brought forth by new conditions.

In the framework of the contacts that are underway on the presidential campaign, informed sources have affirmed that the people presented for serious consideration are now Col Gabi Lahud, Deputy Fu'ad Naffa', and [Former] President Camille Chamoun, although it is Col Lahud, who recently returned to the army, who is now the focus of contacts among active parties. Information being bruited about in his regard indicates that his nomination enjoys the support of the United States, Syria and active Lebanese forces, with the exception of the Phalange Party, which is in serious, decisive opposition to him.

The sources add that the Phalange Party, which has spelled out the specifications of the new president through Shaykh Bashir al-Jumayyil's numerous stated positions, considers that it is the basic Maronite force and has the right to determine the form and

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specifications of this president. Therefore, when Shaykh Bashir al-Jumayyil declares that he will not sign the "Maronites' struggles" over to anyone, he means that he will not allow any Maronite who does not receive his endorsement to be a candidate or a president. Therefore, it appears out of the question so far, in the Phalange context, that agreement might be reached over at least two persons, Gabi Lahud and Camille Chamoun. The latter was chairman of the Lebanese Front, which has met with the disfavor of the Phalange, especially in the eyes of Shaykh Bashir al-Jumayyil, who has not allowed the Chamoun clan to make Maronite decisions or have an influence in them. He was behind the 7 July 1980 operations, which eliminated the effective Chamounite presence by eliminating the military forces of the Liberal Nationalists' Party, and in fact would have swept away Chamoun's own son, had he not managed to escape from the eastern section. The person who contrived all that for the sake of unity in Maronite representation now can, and is, spelling out the specifications of the coming president. Therefore, Lebanese sources believe that no candidate for the presidency will be so bold as to run before first going through Bashir al-Jumayyil in order to receive his satisfaction and blessings. However, the same sources add that the Lebanese parties do not constitute a basic force in the equation of the election of the new president, although they do constitute a pressure force. Therefore, Bashir al-Jumayyil, who is trying to eliminate the political influence of all Maronite leaders, on grounds that he is the only person bearing the Maronite rifle, is trying to exert such a pressure on the foreign forces that are helping to create the new president. One can determine the features of this position through two positions he has taken. The first is the refusal to take Philip Habib's visit insofar as it deals with the presidential campaign, seriously, and the second is to reject a president who emerges as the result of a settlement among the various parties.

However, the sources in their turn, state that many Maronite forces can divorce themselves from the will of Bashir al-Jumayyil if they sense a lack of international, especially American, enthusiasm for his theses and consider that the foreign approach tends not to adopt severe or rigid positions vis-a-vis the issues at hand.

One item of information now being bruited about in Beirut is the fact that the Syrian-Phalangist dialogue, which has been going on at various levels in Beirut and Damascus recently, has, among the issues it has been dealing with, discussed the presidential campaign. Agreement was reached to keep some people out of the transactions because they do not enjoy the support of any active party and they are unable to exercise any role, that is, are weak and not suited to this position — for instance, the current minister of information, Michel Iddih, the governor of the Bank of Lebanon, Michel al-Khuri, the deputy Fu'ad Lahud, and the minister Rene Mu'awwad. In addition, agreement has been reached that it is necessary to try to bring in a strong president who can take part in a solution to the Lebanese crisis or set forth a plan for a solution that he can carry out, even if all parties do not agree to it. The information holds that the discussion has not dealt with any persons who might be described as strong and able to arrive at a solution.

Although some parties still are putting people like Raymond Iddih or Sulayman Franjiyah, forward, these parties have been persuaded that it is impossible that either of the two could come in, for well known Arab and local reasons, and that they are being put forward just for pressure's sake or to maneuver to avoid the premature showing of

cards. Therefore some observers consider that the obscurity of the local-Arab-international equation will in the short run result in a race among parties to maneuver and play only the cards that have been shown, but not to play the hidden cards, which are the real ones. The real cards are the ones now being shuffled in the wings, especially in the wings of the major electors. Habib's visit to Damascus after Beirut lies in the context of this shuffling process.

From the conflagration in the south the new president may emerge.

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LIBYA

SPAIN SUSPENDS ITS IMPORT PAYMENTS

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1913, 9 Jul 82 p 1967

[Text] Spain has suspended, as of 30 June, payment for its imports from Libya in order to urge Libyan authorities to settle an arrears of 130 million dollars due to Spanish businesses, it has been learned from a trustworthy source.

The suspension of payment for Spanish imports, consisting almost totally of petroleum and natural gas, applied to purchases made during the second trimester of the year, the same source indicated.

Speaking for himself, the Spanish secretary of state for foreign trade, Mr Agustin Hidalgo de la Quintana, described the affair as "delicate." He nevertheless emphasized that Spanish authorities had not frozen the Libyan Central Bank's account at the Banco de Espana (the Spanish Central Bank).

In view of Tripoli's delay in settling its arrears which then had risen to 71.5 million dollars, Madrid had adopted at the beginning of the year a first retaliatory measure, by suspending for one month the import of Libyan petroleum. In 1981, these purchases of crude oil had reached a daily average of 55 thousand barrels.

By virtue of an agreement signed subsequently on 9 February to resolve this dispute, Libya promised to settle its arrears after a delay of one month. On its part, Spain had agreed to import 50 thousand barrels of crude daily.

Tripoli at the beginning of June was paying 37 million dollars, for imports undertaken in 1982, but still owes 130 million dollars, Madrid stated, of which 100 million is for purchases of goods and 30 million for civil engineering contracts.

The Spanish-Libyan trade balance presents a considerable imbalance in Tripoli's favor. In 1981, the reserve ratio of Spanish imports to exports was only 30 percent. Also, the Libyan Central Bank's account at the Banco de Espana actually yields a positive balance of more than 232 million dollars.

In Spanish official circles, it has been noted that Spain's petroleum bill amounts to some 50 million dollars a month and that the Libyan debt thus can be discharged in less than three months.

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SYRIA

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD LEADER ON HAMAH, COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 270, 16-22 Apr 82 pp 35-39

[Interview with 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din by Walid Abu Zahr; date and place not specified]

[Text] For this meeting and the atmosphere in which an exciting story was told, I beg the indulgence of the reader for my skipping many of the dramatic details and for casting shadows of dense secrecy over the events. Suffice it to say that this meeting took place in one of the impenetrable strongholds of the Muslim Brotherhood that 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din uses as a secret mobile command post from which he directs the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood and their armed struggle against the existing regime in Syria. The activities are now unified under a single command whose threads 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din holds and coordinates with other armed resistance groups that have entered the arena in Syria.

Preparation for this meeting was actually begun in Paris after the tragic events of Hamah and after the announcement of the formation of the Patriotic Alliance to save Syria. When messengers came to us to deliver statements in the name of the Muslim Brotherhood and in the name of the Patriotic Alliance and they obtained from AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI the agreement the implication of which were final and unalterable, we asked permission to make a trip to enable us, and the reader with us, to learn about the mentality of the leadership that the bloody struggle in Hamah brought forth.

Since the name of 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din had begun to appear in circles having a combat relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood, we suggested meeting with him...We got what we wanted. We traveled for this purpose over many winding paths until we reached the "base" in the darkness of a bitterly cold night.

The base was no more than a simple, faded inconspicuous house. We entered that simply furnished house with the "Brothers" who accompanied us carrying automatic weapons. While sipping the tea of traditional hospitality and trying to restore with its warmth what the cold of the night demanded, an imposing man in his 50's came in. Everything about him signaled vitality and dynamism. You were fascinated by his eyes that radiated dignity and enchantment. Calmly and confidently, he walked over to us and without

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preliminaries said: I am 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din. We skipped the usual greetings and familiar courtesies to engage (immediately) in this conversation which lasted 2 hours. When it ended, it was past 2 am and the night had begun to prepare to retreat before the light of dawn. That was an indication of an arduous return to our starting point in order to bring this interview promptly to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI and our readers at a time when they are anxious for anything that will throw light on the escalating armed struggle in Syria.

[Abu Zahr] I said to him without any preliminaries, Who are you? And he answered without hesitation:

[Sa'd al-Din] My name is 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din and I am 52 years old. I joined the Muslim Brotherhood on 5 July 1945 and have been in close touch with the movement and the group from that day until this hour.

I participated in all kinds of activities, including guidance, political action, and administrative work...Then in 1975 I was entrusted with the leadership of the movement after differences of opinion had crept into the ranks over secrecy because the movement changed from open to secret activities since the advent of this tyrannical regime now crouching on the chest of Syria.

[Pause] After that an attempt was made to repair the rift and close ranks. This attempt reached a peak in 1974 and ended with the call for general elections in the ranks of the group in which the leadership participated just as most of the individuals of the group do likewise. As a result, I was charged with serving as a general control officer responsible for activities and for strengthening unity in the ranks.

[Continuing] Effective activity began early in 1976. Among the results of this activity was the unification of individuals of the group in accordance with sound organization...and they operated in accordance with a well-conceived plan the drafting and study of which took more than a year and a half and ended with a definition of purpose, goal...stages, methods, etc.

After this unification of the individuals of the organization, there was another unification of the organization with the masses in most Syrian cities. The organization grew at an astonishing rate. Everyone knew its purpose, goal, and tasks and adjusted his position accordingly. The true state of affairs was manifested particularly in the cities of the north, in Adlab, Aleppo, Rif Adlab, and Rif Hamah as well as in Latakia. This healthy phenomenon then began to spread to the east of Syria and to the south as well. Another accomplishment of this stage was the strengthening of the bond between the organization on the inside and the organization on the outside. There had been a chasm (...) However, it was filled up and bridges and channels were built. Each of them complemented the other. That produced swift efforts, which also ended in a total unification of the Muslim Brotherhood movement inside Syria with that outside and with the Muslim Brotherhood movements elsewhere in the world. Thus, we established very firm relations with about 30 organizations in the Arab World, Asia, Africa, and in foreign countries as well.

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[Abu Zahr] Without trying to break his train of thought, I asked: Were these relations limited only to groups affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood?

[Sa'd al-Din] No, we established relations and also strengthened them with Islamic organizations in the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, and other places in the world.

And finally...after a new spirit began to spread and new blood circulated in this organization and after it discovered its way and purpose and defined its goal, and after it proceeded in accordance with its well-conceived plan...it found itself face to face with great treachery embodied in the regime of the Asad brothers, Hafiz and Rif'at in Syria. This personal regime did away with the ruling Arab regime of Syria and traveled down a deviant path, propelling it (Syria) forcefully toward the abyss...But let us not rush things. That story will emerge in the course of our interview.

[Apologetic smile, continuing] One of the most important accomplishments of this stage was the organization's preparation for the struggle with the enemy and confrontation of this danger. It responded to the supporters of God and the call of the people to save this plotted-against country. This is the people who gained the upperhand so that the organization had to stand up openly against oppression and the oppressor and corruption. The movement began to engage in armed activities in Syria.

[Abu Zahr] When was the Muslim Brotherhood organization founded as a disciplined and united movement in Syria? And do its leaders remain inside Syria while others are outside?

[Sa'd al-Din] The Muslim Brotherhood organization in Syria was an echo of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt. Its first stirrings began in the 1930's, 1935-1936, and it came out into the open in 1937.

This organization at first took the form of widespread movements in the big major cities. These movements had different names such as Noble Traits of Character, Association of Helpers, Association of Muslim Brothers, Muhammad's Youth, Muslim Youth...Then at the end of the 1930's and beginning of the 1940's, these movements, different in name but similar in goals, urged each other to form a single movement called the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and choose its first leader, i.e., its commander, or controller of the organization, Dr Mustafa al-Siba'i (May God have mercy on him!).

The leaders of the organization were assigned to Syria and other countries. However, they act in accordance with the demands of the stage to unify activities and goals within and without and to strengthen the deep bond with our people, our country, and our land in an atmosphere of increasing harmony.

The Tragedy of Our Age

[Abu Zahr] If we consider the Hamah uprising to be a concrete manifestation of this harmony, I should like you to tell us in detail about what happened in Hamah and what was the extent of the actual losses suffered by the regime's

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forces and your forces and by the inhabitants of Hamah.

[I saw tears in his eyes whenever the name Hamah was mentioned, but he continued to speak quietly] [Sa'd al-Din] What happened in Hamah can be called "the tragedy of our age." We read and heard a great deal about similar distressing events in our time, but we never lived through a tragedy like this one with such meaning and depth.

We read about what happened in some German cities after the war when the occupiers devastated them and about the Marxist revolution in China and the Soviet Union...Many tragedies have occurred in the world, especially in the Third World. But we never heard or knew of such a tragedy like the tragedy of Hamah.

We must not forget that Hamah stood up against the Crusaders and (other) foreigners. That is why the Ayyubid kings took it as their first capital. Although the big Crusader armies came close to the main cities of Syria, they were unable to come close to this city.

In the time of the French mandate, Hamah became a bone sticking in the throat of the French...It continued for a quarter of a century fighting, battling, and resisting them. France punished Hamah and deprived it of all means of subsistence and elements for growth and development, leaving it a rural, farming town...It forbade it to create institutions on its land and to enter the industrial age. However, this only made the people of Hamah more energetic. Prof Akram al-Hurani in his talk with you last week told you a great deal about the recent historical characteristics of Hamah's unyieldingness.

[Continuing] So it is not strange that the present regime finds in Hamah an obstacle before it and before the plot which it came to carry out on Syrian land in order to eliminate its heroic and leading role in the Middle East. As (Miles) Copeland, a CIA agent and representative of its mentality, said in his book "The Game of Nations" and as his counterparts said: "Syria is a snakepit for American imperialism." It refused foreign aid and alliances. It was always helping oppressed peoples. It was always offering assistance to its brothers in obtaining their independence...Therefore, Copeland and other thinkers and observers of Western intelligence agencies were trying to sabotage this role...They tried military coups and other things. They relied on leading personages but they didn't succeed...Then they relied on obvious agents to no avail. And finally they brought in this regime as part of their attempt to put an end to Syria's traditional role.

Since Hamah formed an obstacle to this terrible plan, it was logical (to believe) the reports that had been reaching for us a long time which said they are plotting evil against this city...They want to wipe it off the map and revise its population make-up.

Yes, for more than 2 years news has been reaching us that they are plotting evil against this city. In fact, their ugly intentions were revealed by "sweep operations," a euphemism for the desecration of cities, houses, and holy places.

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[Continuing] More than 2 years ago the oppressive regime began to give its men and myrmidons in this city a free hand to wreak havoc in it. What most inflamed the people and provoked their resentment and anger was that this gang enjoyed, and still enjoys, a free hand in peaceful homes to kill, desecrate, and plunder...violate the honor of the men and shredding the honor of the women. Indeed, they did not hesitate to attack (even) children and kill them. During that time the Arab media was mostly shackled and the Arab conscience was on vacation...The world media shared in this indifference. It was as though these crimes were a motion picture. The last act in these outrages reveal that Haf'al-Asad and his brother Rif'at (there is no truth to what was said in AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI about differences of opinion between them, it is a play they perfected more than 10 years ago and they revealed it by dealing with the opposition in all of its aspects, are principle actors in this play. Whenever shocking crimes occurred, Hafiz al-Asad disavowed them, blaming them on his brother. Then later on we find the two brothers cooperating in new crimes and taking part in other plays. Therefore, the Syrian people pronounced judgment against them as being equally criminal and responsible above others for everything that happens in Syria.

[Continuing and speaking like a roaring waterfall] About 2 months ago the al-Asad brothers and the myrmidons who help them, such as 'Ali Eadar and Muhammad al-Khauili, agreed to give Rif'at unlimited authority to declare martial law and assign him 12,000 soldiers to launch an attack against the northern cities in order to "cleanse them" of opponents, with the city of Hamah regarded as the region of primary operations...They said he could kill as many as 5000 without seeking the agreement of anyone, and they named about a hundred families he could exterminate. They empowered him to kill arbitrarily and randomly, which was nothing new in his modus operandi. But this time it took the form of a decree. He came to Hamah where he continued this policy for 2 months during which time we received detailed news about it. We were asking the young men and Mujahidin to be patient, control their nerves, and avoid a clash. They were saying we will die every day...or part of the city will die. How long? One house was searched more than 10 times. Hardly had Hulagu's soldiers left the house when they entered it again, knowing that what embittered the city most was violation of the honor of the people...No one possessed of dignity, knowledge, or advanced years escaped being abused. No woman in the homes they invaded was safe from their ugly behavior or their disgraceful actions. Nor did the children escape...They were often killed in front of their parents. Worst of all, when an informer would come and tell them "I saw a man enter this building and he didn't come out," they would break into the apartments of the building. When they searched it and didn't find him, they demolished it while the people were inside. They killed many innocent families, everyone of its members, in this way. At this time Hafiz al-Asad was talking about how calm Syria was and how he wiped out the gang, i.e., the Muslim Brotherhood and the opposition.

We Know...But

The world knew these facts yet remained silent about them. I say frankly that we have information about more than 10 Arab states representing about 75 percent of the inhabitants of the Arab homeland and persons directly responsible...They say we know more than what you know about the tragedy that

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is befalling Syria. We have the details just as you do, and more. Nevertheless, we keep hearing about telegrams of congratulations and telegrams of condolence being exchanged between them and the butchers of Damascus...Yes, more than that, we find that they shower the men of the tyrannical regime with gifts beyond all imagining. They give them billions and they know how these billions are spent. They must know, as we know, about the condition of the banks, which are uneasy about the large sums deposited by the Mafia mob ruling Damascus.

Let us return to Hamah. Hamah found itself and its people found themselves facing a systematic plan for its annihilation. We were hoping that reason would prevail and that the city would be saved from disaster. But what was planned was planned.

When the inhabitants of Hamah realized they had reached a deadlock, they rose up in the night using the weapons they had and the weapons they wrested from those boisterous fellows after a surprise attack was launched against them...A great battle broke out among the people of the city with all its groups and factions, young men and old men, children and women, in defense of their land, blood, and honor. The Christians were side by side with the Muslims. I say in this connection that the Christians in Syria recorded a shining mark that will have a very great impact on the future of Syria and the region in real solidarity and in the most critical of circumstances and in situations of the strongest pressure. I record here that although Hafiz al-Asad found hypocrites among the Muslims and all the other sects, he was unable to convince a single responsible spiritual Christian to issue a formal statement against the revolt of the people. It must be admitted that the Christians around Hamah were also honorable. They were proud to aid the casualties when the missiles and artillery began to mow them down in the quarters of Hamah and force them to seek refuge in the outskirts. Hafiz al-Asad obtained with these terrible weapons, weapons of mass destruction, an instrument to suppress the people of Syria after the army's mission changed from the defense of Syria's borders to the suppression and persecution of the Syrian people.

There are many details that out of respect for the honor of the people we refrain from mentioning, things the soul loathes to talk about, because one cannot bear to hear them. When all the people know what happened to the girl students and the circumstances under which they were criminally attacked, they will know the magnitude of the responsibility, the scale of the crime they committed, and the degree of responsibility of those who stood alongside Hafiz al-Asad and helped him. I am referring here to some of the Arab rulers whose names I need not mention...

The dead are many, 8,000 according to the lowest estimate. Other estimates place the number of victims of the massacre at 30,000, not to mention the enormous destruction of homes, although the Hamah population was between 280,000 and 300,000 individuals.

I want to state that these fateful and tragic events cannot be ignored by the people. I am not saying it is only the people of Hamah who are seeking revenge against this tyrannical regime, for all the Syrians sympathize with

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the people of Hamah. But those people of Hamah who have sworn vengeance are many. Perhaps the leaders of the ruling regime know that very well.

Liquidations in the Army

[Abu Zahr] What is the present attitude of the Syrian Army, especially in light of the events of Hamah? And is it true that one of the brigades joined the Mujahidin in Hamah?

[Sa'd al-Din] The 47th Brigade was stationed 7 km from Hamah near Ma'rin, a village on the way to Homs. This brigade was placed here as a means of threatening the city as was intended. When the fighting broke out in the city and the Mujahedin were in control all over, there was an open split in the brigade, some of them supporting the people and the Mujahedin. This breakdown and dissension continued to the end. Something of this kind, but to a lesser extent, occurred in the 21st Brigade, which was brought from Qatifah to the city of Hamah to demolish it.

The Syrian Army is suffering from this regime what (other) groups of people are suffering. The basic mission of the Syrian Army, as I said, changed from defense of the homeland and its borders to an instrument of repression, and the liquidation in it have not yet stopped. This shows that opposition has not ceased nor does it appear that it can be stopped....

Hafiz al-Asad wanted to place the higher units of this army in the hands of those who assist him through the factions in governing Syria. Uprisings in the army follow one another. Three months ago the whole world heard about the arrest of a large number of officers, perhaps about 200 according to the lowest estimate, but some observers say there were 400 officers from the various services.

The army is going through the same crisis in all respects from which the Syrian people are suffering: sectarian discrimination, persecution of everyone with a free voice, insulting individual honor without reason or cause, arbitrary persecution to the point of crimes--all of which we detest and reject. The people entertain the hope that the Syrian Army will participate in settling the situation at the decisive hour...This is our opinion of our army. Despite all the liquidations and all the wounds it has suffered, it will remain a patriotic army that will shake this shame off itself and wipe it from the brow of the people and unite with them so that the people of Syria can resume their well-known role in the region, resist their enemies, and share in bearing their burdens. This is our view of the army, that's what it was and still is. The hope we rest on it increases day by day. I apologize for holding back on some of the details because they are military secrets, but tomorrow holds no secrets.

[Abu Zahr] Why don't Aleppo and the rest of the Syrian cities show solidarity with Hamah?

[Sa'd al-Din] All the cities do maintain solidarity with one another because of the people's unity, but they are not in a position to stand with Hamah

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because the people are unarmed and the regime's army is not engaged at the borders. The borders are protected by the international police which helped it more than 20 times. The people were quickly disarmed. That was because the penal code specified a one month's prison term for carrying a gun without a permit. But Hafiz al-Asad raised the penalty from 1 month to 5 years and then raised it (again) in a new decree to 20 years or death. The people were stripped of all means of resistance.

We Will Hang You in Front of Your Shops

[Sa'd al-Din continues] Aleppo tried to protest but it was threatened with bombardment, wipe out, and destruction. Damascus also tried, but Hafiz al-Asad summoned to the republican palace members of the chambers of commerce and threatened that anyone who closed his shop would be hanged on its door... Don't you believe, as I do, that foreign occupation would not dare to do anything like that?

This was not all. Other actions were taken that provoke laughter and disgust at the same time - and the worst calamity is what provokes laughter. After Hamah was demolished, the regime brought out the inhabitants of villages in Jabal al-'Alawi by well-known police methods to stage a demonstration in support of Hafiz al-Asad's stance in which he would say: These inhabitants of Hamah are celebrating the demolition of their city (!) and dancing on the corpses of their sons!

As the Prophet (God bless him and grant him salvation!) said: "If it is not granted, do as you wish."

Does he know shame at all this creature who stands before a city that has been demolished and flattened over the heads of its inhabitants. Foreign correspondents see that it has become like the ruins of some German cities after World War II. Despite that, immorality reached the point where he could say that those singers in the phony demonstration are celebrating it while dancing on the corpses of their children!

They talk about Nero who set fire to his capital, Rome, a little more than 2000 years ago to enjoy the sight of the fire. We do not know whether these stories are imaginary or not, but people will say even after a thousand years that during an extraordinary period Syria was governed by a perverted group lacking in moral values, beliefs, and standards and that it was devoid of any loyalty to the people or the homeland and the nation. Its head and president deeply rooted with his regime in planned treachery could announce without blinking that the people of Hamah are now demonstrating to support him after the city was pulled down on their heads.

The most ridiculous part of this disaster is the walk of 100 meters that Hafiz al-Asad took among the crowds along the Corniche Mazra'a in Damascus last 7 March to prove he is not afraid to meet with the people.

But everyone knew that the crowd surrounding him were soldiers from the intelligence service and defense units wearing civilian clothing. Moreover,

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special forces had previously occupied all the houses along the route that Hafiz al-Asad took and forced the inhabitants of every house to remain in one room throughout this play.

Television began to join in the 100-meter walk, in scene after scene, to show Hafiz al-Asad in a display of empty heroism.

We consider Hafiz al-Asad to be all but finished, and his last speech proves it. The only consolation for the victims was that hysterical speech which produced a good effect in warning the people of Syria and the other Arab countries (about him).

These are short selections from the tragedy of Hamah that will perhaps rouse the nation to shake off the dust of inactivity, brush away the cobwebs, and move forward.

...Is the Druggist Suitable?

[Abu Zahr] Last year the Syrian regime signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union. What is your view of the background and consequences of this treaty?

[Sa'd al-Din] The Soviet Union has signed many treaties with many countries. However, this game has been exposed. The Soviets insist on it, as they did in their dealings with the Shah of Iran, Sadat, and others.

Therefore we do not expect too much from these treaties.

More than anyone else, the Soviets know that Hafiz al-Asad would not remain in power five minutes if there were genuine, credible, and honest elections.

Our information confirms that the Soviets know the truth about Hafiz al-Asad, but they maintain theatrical friendly relations with his regime because they are better for them than their absence...instead of being out of the region after their experience with al-Sadat and Somalia. They are satisfied to sell arms in order to have funds with which to buy wheat and technology from the advanced Western countries.

[Abu Zahr] What do you think of the coalition of opponents in the new crucible. And how can this coalition deliver the Syrians from their great ordeal?

[Sa'd al-Din] We stated in the program of our rebellion 2 years ago that our power, after relying on God, is strengthened by all our people participating in this rebellion...It was our intention from the beginning and our understanding of the history of Syria and of its population and social make-up that complete cooperation between all the sons of the people is essential. He who doesn't understand this reality has forgotten the main issue in this struggle.

Hence, this matter was self-evident and clear to us. Even the 'Alawites whom Hafiz al-Asad wants to throw into the struggle were sent an appeal to

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join us against this plague who wants to live on the debris of sectarian disputes between the children of one people.

Our concern has been for this coalition to consider the faith of the nation, its traditions, values, and inheritance. We have encountered no difficulties in this regard...Indeed, we found the other parties just as desirous of it as we are.

They are Arabs just as we are Arabs and Muslims just as we are Muslims. We therefore found no difficulty in convincing the others. On the contrary, we found complete mutual understanding.

We spoke about the freedoms in our rebellion. We asserted our belief in a multiplicity of parties and in the freedom of people to form parties provided that these parties do not adopt beliefs or principles that conflict with the faith of the nation and that they are not tied to a foreign power. The decision in this matter should be left up to the judicial authority and not to the executive authority to use to murder the public freedoms. Therefore, our round of talks with the opposition groups did not take much time. In fact, we found ourselves in complete agreement on a solution (to the problem) of what will save Syria...and deliver her from her ordeal so that she can resume her role throughout the world.

Our next stage will be the stage of escalating armed struggle...How we wish we didn't have to carry arms, but the regime in Syria has forced all cultured persons, scholars, scientists, and some of the people, all of them, to bear arms against it.

We have suffered from a regime that kills prisoners, assassinates leading personalities, and takes away freedoms. It bans the press, violates honor, and kidnaps women from the streets...We have suffered from a regime about which it is useless to complain. We can't even pray in the mosques. If people meet in a mosque, the artillery demolishes it. Complaints even to God are prohibited.

The hypocrites who surround Hafiz al-Asad tried to teach him to pray properly in order to complete the deception. But they still haven't taught him, or he was unable to learn, how to place his right hand on his left hand. And whenever he appears on television, we (still) see him placing his left hand on his right hand.

At any rate, disclosure of the secrets of the government and of the governor made all the parties believe there is no deliverance from him except by armed struggle.

[Abu Zahr] Did the political and military cooperation between the Syrian and Iranian regimes also extend to economic matters?...How do you understand this relationship.

[Sa'd al-Din] As for the Iranian revolution, we fully sympathized with it at first in the days of the Shah. Khomeyni in France kept saying that he would

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have friendly relations with his neighbors, that he would call the Gulf not the Persian Gulf but the Islamic Gulf, and that he would return the islands occupied by force by the Shah to the United Arab Emirates. He said he would not proceed from the fanatical Shi'a Safavid dynasty or from the Umayyad dynasty which quarreled with the Prophet's family...but from the concept of the Orthodox (caliphs).

We said if this is indeed the case, the regime will be sound and cooperation with it will be possible on great issues to the benefit of the inhabitants of the region. But strange to say, after Khomeyni came to power, he did not do anything that he promised. On the contrary, we found the studies and writings and constitutional provisions heading in another and very narrow direction... a sectarian direction. We thought our common interests would make us all go beyond this framework, but we found them clinging to this more than in the time of the Shah.

We were very patient and consulted with them on this matter. A number of our delegations visited them...We were very anxious to remain on good terms with them. The responsible ones among them promised us they would correct this error. They blamed it on the lack of government unity and on the fact that their groups were very different and incompatible...that they do not understand many of the issues or know anything about them and they want to try to understand them again, although their circumstances are grim...etc.

Then we saw them draw close to the regime of Hafiz al-Asad. They said we will not be able to cooperate with you if you attack the ruling party in Syria and don't attack sectarianism there.

We said to them: If you saw two faults in the Syrian regime, why are we only attacking it from one corner for only one shortcoming...Even if the regime were partisan in Syria and freed the parties, we would enter into a free, constructive, and public dialogue with it. But the danger is that the regime is heading in a dangerous partisan direction. You say you do not agree with it either in its partisanship or in its sectarianism. In that case, your hostility toward this regime should steadily increase. Why do you stretch out your hands to it? They said we will correct this error. Whenever we asked them, they would say to us: "Do not attack it in a partisan way."

At the same time there were secret and sectarian contacts between Damascus and Tehran. Indeed, information about our visit and talks with them was steadily passed on to Damascus. I did not visit Tehran, my associates did, and every delegation that went there returned with a negative attitude and we found its hopes for the Iranian regime had dwindled. We soon discovered that this regime squatting in Tehran was in the same trench with the regime of Hafiz al-Asad. We found this odd and asked for an explanation...We said: You want to regain and liberate Palestine, yet Hafiz al-Asad agreed with "the red line," i.e., the truce line with the Zionists. You say you want to liberate Jerusalem, yet Hafiz al-Asad allows international policemen to come in. You say you call for modesty in women, yet Hafiz al-Asad tears the veil and clothes from women and looses the mob on veiled girls in Damascus. You want a regime that observes the traditions of Islamic morality, yet Hafiz al-Asad and his regime violate

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these traditions every day. What do you have in common with Hafiz al-Asad if not blind sectarian fanaticism?

[Continuing] The situation in Iran, according to my information, threatens to fall apart...The moderates with whom we can come to an understanding are under siege. The magazine AL-SHAHID, which published one letter from us, was threatened with destruction if it cooperated with us one more time.

We know we are going with this regime down a blind alley and that narrow sectarian considerations have overcome rational values.

Just 2 week ago the preacher in Iran joined with the foreign minister in accusing us, distorting our history, and attacking us. We were forced to defend ourselves and reply to this deceit and false charges in accordance with the words of God: "Then those who are fighting would be victorious."

[Continuing] The regime in Iran is proceeding in an increasingly sectarian and significant direction. We received copies of books they recently published. They are proceeding in a significant direction and attacking the best men of Islam and some of the Orthodox caliphs...in the Persian language. We think too highly of ourselves and of the peoples of the region to fall into this swamp.

Calamity after Calamity

[Abu Zahr] During 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam's last visit to Iran he concluded an agreement for Syria to be supplied with 60 million tons of Iranian oil in a year in an attempt to provide the Syrian regime with the means of survival. What do you think of it?

[Sa'd al-Din] Cooperation between the Syrian and Iranian regimes will make each of them a disaster for the other and whoever supports either of them will suffer the consequences. An agreement like this is fresh proof of the error of the Iranian regime because if it didn't know the truth, the matter would be less serious, but the men of the Iranian regime, as we heard from them, know the truth of the situation in Syria...

So Iran is not starting from a basis of principle in its foreign policy. Iran calls itself an Islamic state but it associates and deals only with those who cooperate with South Yemen and with the regime of Hafiz al-Asad...Even in conferences that it organizes in Iran (our youths attended several of them) we find that 90 percent of those invited are from among the enemies of Islam from the extreme left, from Nicaragua, from Vietnam, and from other states not tied to Islam.

[Abu Zahr] What is your opinion of the Camp David agreements? Do you favor them as Hafiz al-Asad says?

[Sa'd al-Din, smiling] This question doesn't deserve an answer. Those who bear arms and offer their lives to free their homeland do not ask about corrupt treaties.

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Our history is eloquent. Nothing disturbs Zionism as much as our movement. The Camp David group and Hafiz al-Asad know who the men of the region are and who are the ones willing to give up their lives for the cause of God in defending their land and their people. They know who reject all solutions that call for surrender. I ask who are the ones who opposed the treacherous agreements in Egypt? They were the Muslim Brotherhood. Who settled affairs in Egypt? Khalid al-Islambuli and his brothers from among the university youth are the ones who settled affairs. Hafiz al-Asad didn't do it. Al-Asad played with Camp David in another way consistent with the psychology of the inhabitants of the region, using the "red line" and the international police...and a perpetual honeymoon with Israel and joint dramas.

The Camp David question, you'll forgive me, we don't ask about it. But the real parties (concerned) ask about it and Hafiz al-Asad does as head of his real parties.

I want to note here that we have documents, secret letters exchanged between Hafiz al-Asad and big powers around this region...In fact, we have documents in Hafiz al-Asad's voice as he announced sectarian states, relying on the support of Israel for these sectarian states.

Voice of Reason

[Abu Zahr] What is your opinion of the war between Iraq and Iran?

[Sa'd al-Din] We said before and we say now this war must be halted immediately. Then unconditional and direct negotiations to settle the dispute, to stop the war because it is wasting the strength of the region...We hope the rulers of Tehran will listen to the voice of reason.

[Abu Zahr] Will the Syrian Patriotic Front combine with the Christians?

[Sa'd al-Din] Yes, indeed. The first to broadcast the news in Paris was a Christian belonging to the Front. He is solidly behind it.

[Abu Zahr] What do you think of the relationship between Islam and Arabism?

[Sa'd al-Din] There used to be an artificial and formal dissension between Arabism and Islam, and the enemy profited greatly from it. Many of us and others as well fell into the trap of bygone contradictions, but this dissension shows signs of ending, with complete and total solidarity developing between Arabism and Islam. Western missionaries and orientalist worked for it. It has a long history. It has been interpreted in various ways since the last century in the corridors of the American and Jesuit universities. And secret conferences have been held (to discuss it).

You ask: Is it necessarily so that if I am an Arab, I am a heretic and enemy of Islam? If I am a sincere Muslim, do I have to hate the Arabs to whom I am related?

...What is this artificial dissension?

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We found the melting pot where Arabism inspired Islam and Islam inspires Arabism and there is no room for dissension between them.

As many on both sides have said: Arabism is the body and Islam is its soul. A soul cannot do without a body nor a body do without a soul. This formulation will have the best consequences in this region, God willing.

[Abu Zahr] You are against what is called the Ba'th Party in Syria. What is your opinion of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party now in power in Iraq?

[Sa'd al-Din] The Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in Iraq is the original one. It opposes the regime of Hafiz al-Asad. It is one of the main groups with which we have had discussions. We did not find any incompatibility between them and ourselves, judging by the texts of the articles I mentioned previously...On the contrary, we found that it is based on believing, religious people and that no party chose malevolent sects to make them a support for their power. We therefore found many of the differences of opinion between us and the party to enter the ranks of the Syrian opposition. It exists on Syrian territory because we have allied ourselves with the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party leading Iraq. The Nasserites and Arab socialists and many other political groups have allied themselves with us on this basis.

The Ba'th in Iraq differs radically and totally in its make-up and orientation from the party of the same name in Syria. If it were like Hafiz al-Asad's party in its orientation, we would not have met with it under any circumstances. We found it to be radically different from Hafiz al-Asad's party. It is a party of the nation. It has a foundation representing the nation while the other (Syrian) is a sectarian party...We found its leaders, after we got to know them close-up, to be truly religious men. I don't want to go into the details because we would be discussing personal matters of no concern to us now.

In Syria, it is impossible for anyone who fears God and knows Him to come to the top. In fact, one obtains a position of responsibility only by way of immorality, atheism, apostasy or by attacking the values of the nation and its inheritance. Some party members at the top know the true state of affairs in Syria and there is a dialogue and cooperation between us and them. Their situation is distressing. No one dares to pray. In fact, some of them reveal their thoughts in Ramadan so as to remain in power, to prove they are worthy of assuming responsibility in Hafiz al-Asad's regime...The distance is great and the difference vast.

[Abu Zahr] There are Alawites who are for the regime and others against it... How does the movement deal with the Alawites?

[Sa'd al-Din] Given our revolutionary bent, we do not want to exchange the rule of one party for the rule of another. Given our fighting orientation, we do not want one sect to take the place of another...Here we say clearly the Alawites are fellow citizens, many of them have been wronged. Hafiz al-Asad wants to hurl them into the furnace of sectarian war. Some of them actually weep and curse Hafiz al-Asad the way the other sects curse him. We want to save them from the sectarian quagmire as we want to save all the groups of our people.

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Hafiz al-Asad wanted to exalt the sect. Then he wanted to set the sect over the nation and the tribe over the sect and the family over the tribe. But our accounting is only with those who acted in collusion and dipped their hands in blood. As for the great majority of sects that came under the pressure of this tyrannical regime, we are working to save them just as we are working to save other groups. We do not say this for political reasons...We say it out of principle and good will. This is what we learned from the noble messenger when he conquered Mecca and said to its people: "What do you think I am doing to you?" They said, "noble brother and son of a noble brother." He said: "Go, for you are free."

[Abu Zahr] Syria's future program is for everyone. This is clearly stated in the program of the Patriotic Alliance. About a year ago an attempt was made to assassinate Hafiz al-Asad and you issued a statement in which you announced your responsibility for it. Can you throw a little light on this action?

[Sa'd al-Din] The truth is there are persons close to Hafiz al-Asad who are cooperating with our Islamic movement. They were weary of his crimes so they attempted to assassinate him.

[Abu Zahr] Do you want the last word?

[Sa'd al-Din] Our word has been ready for a long time and it is: O rulers of the Arabs, O rulers of non-Arabs, O mankind everywhere...You must consider the future of your relations with the Syrian people.

It is a serious matter that this silence and this attitude prevail. We are afraid that the rulers' attitudes will spoil the relations of our people in Syria with the rest of the Arab people, relations that constitute a basic strategy for this nation in its capacity for steadfastness, liberation, and progress.

I am convinced the regime in Syria is temporary and accidental...It does not represent the inclination of anyone in our nation. God willing, it will go away soon. I am not only optimistic, I am convinced this black summer cloud will be dispersed soon, very soon.

Finally, our people have sworn and issued their judgment to punish this killer who has penetrated deeply into the blood and who has dipped his hands and the hands of his retinue into the blood of the innocent and the blood of the chaste. We say to him what Khalid ibn Walid said while besieging the Byzantines in the stronghold of Aleppo after the siege had been going on for 9 months and the Byzantine leader thought boredom had crept into the ranks of the warriors so that he could negotiate with them to withdraw. Said Khalid ibn Walid, May God be pleased with him, addressing the reader and the infidels around him: "Where is your escape? By God, if you ascended to heaven, God would have caused us to ascend to you. And if you descended to earth, God would have cause us to descend to you. I have come to you with a people who love death the way you love life."

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