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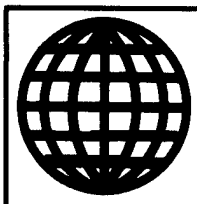

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Arabs Criticized for Deal To Pay West's Gulf Expenses

91AA0002A Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Sep 90 p 6

[From the "Missiles" column by Ibrahim al-Wardani: "The Deal and the Joke"]

[Text] Good morning!

The strangest deal in our astonishing international age is the brilliant one agreed upon recently this week—that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states should pay the major part of the cost of the Western armies, including the fleets, airplanes, tanks, and endless concentrations of weapons they brought with them, so that they can camp in those countries to protect them from possible attack by their wicked, treacherous brother.

An instant deal that took no time for consultations, computations, and guarantees! Openended, of course, with no one knowing how long it will continue! The figures for the cost—tens of billions of dollars! We say "tens," but they may reach hundreds—equal to the value of Arab oil for a number of generations past and to come.

If we look at the deal by the logic of humanitarian good intentions, it is a gallant response by the Western powers to the call for help by the weak and helpless people of the Gulf, who have appealed for aid to protect the being of their countries, the lives of their families, and the security of their existence. The least one ought to do, of course, is pay the cost of this voluntary job! But if we look at the deal—excuse me—by the logic of evil intentions, or say by the logic of the politics of material interests and the dealings of strong with weak, it was an instant rush that did not wait for appeals for aid and calls for help to protect the Arab oil wells that are the vital artery of the West and the prosperity of its peoples.

No matter whether we look at the deal with the former or the latter logic, and no matter whether the appeal for help or the rush was for a limited time or openended, our Arab brothers have in fact fallen into a disaster of a tremendous loss—a disaster brought upon them by "awesome hero" brother Saddam, a disaster involving the destruction in a single day's gamble of most of the wealth the Arabs had been gathering for years. Then there is the calamity that the dubious among us expect—the return of Western imperialism with the hosts of its armies, the power of its hegemony, and its great ambitions in the Arab lands. Merely that? This time we pay it the cost of its presence, bending our backs thankfully and strengthening it!

Regret? No, regret is no longer of any use. What would be the use of regret?

We will merely mention those who are regretful. We say that if a similar deal, or at least part of it, found its way to kinsmen in Egypt, wouldn't they be capable of creating the required protection and desired security? There would be no appeal for aid, no summons for help, and no desperate bowing to the ranks of the West and those far off. No gift from them or from us. No, it would be repayment of part of her [Egypt] loss and bleeding in several Arab wars. Furthermore, it would strengthen her respected position, her mighty people, her gallant army, and her inherited resources. You left her struggling in a sea of debts, bread crises, and insistent poverty, who alone was capable of protecting, deterring, and guarding without the need to summon help from a stranger who might waylay or betray.

It is too late for regret. What would be the use of regret?

What is left for us is the "joke" that is more brilliant than the deal—what is being proclaimed East and West as the so-called "Arab solution." Yes, the Arab solution! De Cuellar, Gorbachev, Mitterrand, and even Bush himself say it. The Arab solution? How, by God? With what air shall we fill their palms? With the circus spectacles of the shiftings of 'Umar al-Bashir? With the sudden visits of Yasir 'Arafat? With the leaps of King Hussein? With telephone calls and telexes between 'Ali Salih and al-Zayn? Or...or that cardboard league that has turned into a paper airplane whose string has escaped from the hands of the heedless players?

The deal and the joke! The West passes them around in order to sneer and to amuse itself at the expense of the quarrelling, foolish brothers.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Mutual Benefit Seen in Saddam-'Arafat Relations

90p40137A Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 27 Aug 90 p 10

[Article by Moshe Zack]

[Text] The response by Palestinian businessmen in the territories was decisive: They are willing to to suffer for the great Arab cause. If Saddam Husayn thinks it desirable to use gas, they will be ready to take upon themselves the double jeopardy of chemical warfare, despite the fact that gas makes no distinction between the two sides of the Green Line.

This response is one of the expressions of fervor that has struck Arabs in the territories as well as some Israeli Arabs, with respect to an Arab leader standing against the world.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait did not surprise Yasir 'Arafat. He was a junior partner in the strategem. By the time Iraqi tanks encircled Kuwait City, Palestinian bank administrators in Kuwait were talking about financial annexation, and giving orders to transfer to Iraq billions deposited in western banks, with these banks taking the lead. 'Arafat promised to give authority to Palestinians who worked in Kuwait, though he did not succeed in

implementing his plan. Western governments hastily froze Kuwaiti and Iraqi funds which were deposited.

Today, Faysal al-Husayni, Sari Nusaybah, and also to a certain degree MK [Knesset Member] 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawishah, are trying to express their solidarity with Iraq, springing from their opposition to the landing of the American contingent in Saudi Arabia. But this claim does not withstand examination, because 'Arafat was involved, as a junior partner, in Saddam's plan to take over Kuwait.

The basis for cooperation between Saddam and 'Arafat was not formed after Mubarak's diplomatic disappointment in setting up an Israeli-Palestinian-Egyptian meeting in Cairo, as fans who support negotiations with the PLO try to claim. The diverse support for Iraq by Palestinian terrorist groups produced solidarity with Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait.

Even when 'Arafat coordinated his political activities with Mubarak regarding Baker's initiative, and even before his wanton attack on the Egyptian president who was eating from the Americans' hands, Palestinian radio in Baghdad broadcast orders to the intifadah leadership. Also, when Saddam besieged Mubarak with treachery by promising not to invade Kuwait, Iraq was the main support for the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

Palestinian identification with Saddam has a much deeper significance than that given by MK Darawishah during an Israeli television interview. This is not only support for the idea of Arab unity (he emphasized that this was not an invasion, but a unification), but also support for the course established by Saddam in international relations in which agreements were signed only to be broken.

In 1975 Saddam sought to be free from the Kurdish rebellion supported by Iran, the United States, and Israel, and he therefore signed an agreement with Iran to demarcate the Shatt al-'Arab boundary.

Over the next four years, the agreement was unilaterally nullified, as a preamble to the war it started with Iran.

'Arafat, who last year broke promises for the most part on the cessation of terrorism and on reconciliation with Israel's existence, needed an instructor like Saddam who could relaease him from the vows he had taken on the terrorism issue and on the issue of the concept of two states.

Saddam believed in the tactic of promises: During the Gulf War, when he needed support from the Amir of Kuwait, Saddam dripped the sweetest honey and made pledges to the Kuwaiti leader to honor his independence. However, when war broke out, he did not appear harsh in annexing Kuwait by force, but, instead he did so under the guise of unity.

The formula "unity at the proper time" is very easy for the same Palestinians who are suffering time constraints and are now ready to agree to a two-state solution. This is a precedent for an open option to the claim of "uniting" Galilee, for example, with the State of Palestine which they hope to establish.

'Arafat is enthusiastic about the wave of demonstrations in support of Saddam. Perhaps Saddam is keeping 'Arafat as a contact of refuge. If and when he is forced to descend from the balloon whose name is Kuwait, he may need 'Arafat's help in order to explain to his people that he did this to answer an appeal by the head of the PLO to redirect resources toward the decisive struggle for Palestine.

For eight years, Saddam racked his people through a tortuous, bloody war with Iran. He directed his people for eight years against the terrible enemy in Tehran, but he is forced to turn his resources to another front, to the "American danger." He evacuated the territories he occupied in Iran, released the prisoners, and informed his people there was a loftier goal than wrestling with Iran.

He is now directing all his arrows at Bush, but when he is convinced that he has no channce in a military confrontation, Saddam will not hesitate to leave Kuwait on the pretext of the "Israeli danger." 'Arafat is said to be providing him with the pretext. d

Hamas Responds to Competing Organizations

Hamas and Islamic Liberation Front

90AE0360A London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Sep 90 pp 8-9

[Article by H.S.]

[Text] London—In AL-QABAS AL-DUWALI (the 4-5 August 1990 issue), the following item appeared in the "Secrets of the Arabs" feature:

"The PLO's leadership in the interior has taken fundamental measures to fragmentize the Hamas [Islamic resistance] movement through the support of the Islamic movements, each one separately, in confronting the demands of Hamas, which have become intolerable according to some PLO leaders."

I graciously passed over this item, knowing that the power of any true Islamic movement ultimately strengthens Hamas and its proposal, because Hamas is in no way a party whose members wish to attain power or personal gains. Rather, it is a fighting group that preaches a humane, cultural, Islamic program. Any movement or group whose efforts blend with this program is in the ranks of Hamas and adds to the power of Hamas. That is the first point. Another point is that aware Islamic groups, regardless of their size, understand the secrets of the game. It is not easy to fool them or cause them to be at odds with one another.

Nonetheless, that item reminded me of a report written by Basim Sakajha in the Jordanian AL-RA'Y newspaper

(9 August 1990). The report's headline read: "The foremost Armed Palestinian Organization Declares its Position; the Islamic Liberation Front Affirms Its Support of Iraq." The report stated that a person, who had adopted the name "Bassam" as a movement name, visited AL-RA'Y and made a number of statements on behalf of the Islamic Liberation Front, including that "the front is placing all of its capabilities at the disposal of the Iraqi leadership at this stage, the front will also escalate its attacks, and it will strike American targets wherever they are in the region and outside it." The report's author added that this front had claimed responsibility for blowing up a passenger bus as it was passing through Arab Jerusalem, which resulted in the killing or wounding of all of its occupants. In response to another question, the same spokesman expressed his conviction that the front constitutes the largest armed, Palestinian organization that is active in the occupied territories!!

The report states that there is information to the effect that the front considers itself a part of the PLO and a part of the unified leadership in the interior.

Mr."Bassam" also stated: "We differ with the Hamas Islamic resistance movement in this regard. We will not permit it to be an alternate to the [Palestine Liberation] organization as a rallying point." He stated that the media agencies exaggerate in describing the power of Hamas in the occupied Palestinian lands.

This is almost most of what was contained in the report by Mr. Basim Sakajha on the Islamic Liberation Front and its old and new political positions.

The astonishing thing is, how did Mr. Basim Sakajha write this report of his? If someone had approached Mr. Sakajha and told him that he represents the Muslim Martyrs Movement, or the Islamic Revolution, or the Palestinian Hizballah, or..., or..., would Mr. Sakajha have published the remarks of such a representative? Or, does Mr. "Bassam" have special characteristics with which Mr. Sakajha is acquainted from his private sources?!!

As Islamicists [fundamentalists], we welcome any group that acts against Zionism and its allies, whether such a group is Islamic or nationalistic. However, some are inventing Palestinian Islamic organizations from nothing and attempting to inflate them in the media to confound those working sincerely for Islam and Palestine. This is entirely unacceptable.

We know this party and who is behind it. This "Bassam" is known to us. We know who gives him his instructions. We also know that this front exists only on paper. Its only activity is to issue communiques that threaten Soviet Jews, the states that export them, the airlines that transport them, and America. It also engages in other incitements that are not at all beneficial, but rather diminish the value of the communiques issued by the true Islamic groups.

The report's statement that the bus operation was carried out by the front is entirely untrue, because the Islamic Jihad Detachments organization carried it out. This front's issuance of a communique after every operation, in which it declares that it carried out the operation, is a well-known method. It does not change the facts one bit.

Mr. "Bassam," whose real name we do not wish to mention, although we know it well, states, with great modesty, that his front is the largest armed, Palestinian group that is active in the occupied territories. Is not this remark a true cause for derision?! If not, let him present an account of the achievements of his organization, an organization that claims it was formed three years ago, when in fact its communiques are all that was formed, and that was only months ago. Nor has it issued anything in the interior. The unified leadership, in which, he claims, his organization is a member, has neither heard of, nor mentioned it!

At the end of the report by Mr. Sakajha, "Bassam" discloses the goal for which his organization is intended. He states: "We differ with Hamas, and we will not permit it to be an alternative to the organization and to be rallied around," and, "media agencies exaggerate in describing the power of Hamas inside the occupied territories."

We hope that this alleged front will become real, and that it will carry out what Mr. "Bassam" stated when he said: "The front will escalate its military operations inside the Palestinian territories, according to a specified, detailed timetable, by fatally striking all military and economic targets."

In addition, we wholeheartedly hope that the dross will fall away, and that what benefits the people will remain. However, we would like to clear the air, so that no one will claim that he is leading the struggles of the fighters in the occupied land, when these struggles have cost him only the printing of a communique and its dispatch to the Reuter news agency or to Agence France Press. We also reiterate that, based on our zeal for our holy cause, as Islamicists, we value the efforts of all those working on behalf of this cause. The arena of the jihad is large enough to accommodate everyone. "Regarding that, let the competitors compete."

Hamas and the PLO

90AE0360B London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Sep 90 pp 14-15

[Article from the AL-SABIL publication]

[Text] The FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH magazine has started a hostile campaign against the Hamas [Islamic resistance] movement. The campaign is directed by the chairmanship. It is not just an article by the editor in the magazine. Hence, it must be treated as an official position. The leadership of the PLO is thus responsible for the consequences of this campaign and the marginal conflicts that might ensue from it, conflicts that could

hurt and greatly damage the uprising. As Hamas stated in its brief response, it has always sought to avoid marginal battles, and it is engaged in the battle of the uprising against the enemy. This battle requires the unity of the forces that are active in it to preserve its continuity and thrust. The PLO leadership must be strongly desirous of the unity of the forces that are active in the intifadah, instead of drifting into a marginal battle with Hamas and other Islamic forces, a battle that only benefits the enemy and brings only disappointed hopes, difficulty, and loss to our masses.

We realize that the primary motive behind this campaign has no relation to the content of the FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH article, which attempted to hide behind it in criticizing the position of Hamas on the PLO. This position is not new, and it is not limited to Hamas alone. Rather, it is the position of all of the Islamic forces, which have long expressed reservations about the secularity of the National Covenant and the basic program that the [Palestine] National Council adopted in its 19th session. What new development prompted this campaign at this particular time? Such a campaign would be expected in political circumstances other than the current political circumstances.

This campaign could have been expected to be mounted if the doors had been opened to the PLO to start engaging in negotiations and deals. However, this campaign has appeared at a time when the doors are closed, the American-Palestinian dialogue has been suspended, Egyptian-Palestinian relations have deteriorated, the winds of war in the region drone closer, and confrontations in the uprising have intensified. This campaign was not expected, and there is no explanation for it within the political equation. Rather, the explanation is in another equation, which is the PLO leadership's fear of popular sympathy for Hamas and the Islamic forces, especially after the elections of workers in the aid agency in Jordan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. These elections produced results that are extremely unsettling for the PLO leadership, which became nervous and incorrectly decided to start a campaign against the Hamas movement in particular. However, when have such campaigns solved the popularity problem of this or that power? The PLO in general, and the FATAH [Palestine Liberation Movement] in particular, have extensive experience in this regard. Both have been the target of extensive pillorying campaigns that did not at all affect the people's position. The PLO leadership must therefore search out the true reasons that have led to the deterioration of its popularity and the ascent of the popularity of Hamas. It must resolve the matter in this way, not by making the great mistake of launching an unjustified, unfair campaign against Hamas, a campaign that will only damage the intifadah.

We now come to the main topic of the FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH article. The article attempted to censure the position of Hamas, because Hamas has not joined the PLO. The article argued that, because the PLO is the entity and sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, remaining outside that entity and challenging its representation are to be condemned.

Before discussing this issue, it should be stressed that the position of Hamas on this issue is also the position of all Islamic forces—Palestinian, Arab, and fundamentalist. In other words, the problem has wider, more comprehensive dimensions.

However, the basic problem in discussing the article's thesis is confusion—whether intentional or unintentional—surrounding the PLO's capacity and how it should be treated in the light of that capacity. The article proceeds from the view that the PLO is an entity and state, just like any other Arab or non-Arab state. In setting up this hypothesis without proving it, the article produces the results desired of it.

But how can the PLO be a state? It declared the establishment of a Palestinian state at the 19th session of the [Palestine] National Council. In other words, we have come to have the PLO and we have come to have a state. Are they one and the same? Or has the decreed state supplanted the PLO? However, in order that there be a state that imposes duties on its citizens, such a state must have sovereignty over its land. Its subjects must enjoy their rights before they can be asked to fulfill their duties. Where are we with respect to all of this? If it said that the PLO is a symbolic or abstract entity in the absence of territory and sovereignty, or that the declared state remains symbolic and abstract until it is established on the land, it is necessary to precisely determine which is to be the abstract, symbolic entity for all Palestinians. Is it the state or the PLO? However, what is happening bears much jamming and interference, which makes it difficult to make this determination, and gives the PLO another character, i.e., the character of a political front, or it gives the executive organization the character of a political leadership. It is obvious that there is a great difference between an entity and a political front, or between a state and a government, or between an entity and a parliament or a national council.

If we go back to the example of an Arab or non-Arab state, we find that a citizen or political party can boycott elections, refuse to enter parliament, oppose the president when he is also the prime minister, and oppose the government. The citizen can do so without worrying about violating the state and the entity.

Therefore, it is both erroneous and dangerous to erase the borders between the entity and the executive leadership or the parliamentary council, because there are fundamental objections to charging the state as a state, and the entity as an entity, with the responsibility for executive policy, or the responsibility for elections or appointments to the parliament. This afflicts heavy damage on the state, which must be outside this or that policy. It also damages the entity, which must be far from this or that political viewpoint. The FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH article states that whoever opposes the policies of the executive authority rebels against the

entity, and whoever opposes the formation of the National Council and the method for appointing members to it rebels against the entity. It thus delivers a heavy blow to the concept of the PLO as an entity for the entire Palestinian people, which is the concept that the covenant tried to entrench when it regarded every Palestinian as a natural member in the PLO without requiring the submission of a membership application and without conditioning membership on agreement with the policies of the executive committee, because a membership application has to do with a party or a front, whereas agreement or disagreement with a government's policies is a legal right that is not allowed to be imposed on [but rather must be exercised by] citizens.

Hence, this confusion within the PLO regarding its aspiration to be the entity for all Palestinians. Therefore, it is permitted to treat the PLO as a front and to confront it on this level. Hence, the ball is in the PLO's court, and not in the Islamicists' court. If they want the PLO to be an entity or a state, they must treat it as such, if they want it to be like a front, they must accept treatment of it as such, and if they want a mixture, let them accept mixed treatment.

Therefore, the entire subject on which the FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH article bases its attack against the position of Hamas on the PLO is invalid.

Finally, whoever sows a mixture of wheat, barley, and darnel will only reap a mixture of wheat, barley, and darnel.

IRAQ

Strength of Iraqi Ground Forces Assessed

91p40001A Tel Aviv BAMAHANE in Hebrew
29 Aug 90 p 8

[Interview with Brigadier General Avigdor Qahalani by correspondent Dor'am Gonet; date, place not given]

[Text]

[Dor'am Gonet] What characterizes desert warfare, particularly Saudi desert warfare?

[Avigdor Qahalani] The conditions in Sinai and the Negev remind one of the conditions in Saudi Arabia, though it is hotter in Saudi Arabia. The topography and the relief are similar. Combat in the desert is characterized first and foremost by vast distances, making a prominent role possible for tremendous armored power in ground combat. The forces are not limited to axial routes and can bring every dimension of firepower against the enemy. There is no need to travel in columns. In the desert there is a clear advantage to mobility; i.e., to the attacking force, which can also choose the easiest attack formations. It is very difficult for a defensive force in the desert as opposed to mountainous or broken terrain. Likewise, they must build tactical obstacles such as mine fields, anti-tank ditches, ramps, and outposts. The preparation of an effective defensive line requires a large infrastructure and it is very difficult to defend huge plains. The attacker is able to operate with long movements and to store up for a frontal assault with the enemy.

In the desert, forces are exposed to each other and one cannot disappear. With aerial photography, and at times even with binoculars, it is possible to locate the enemy. Open fields of fire are long, almost four or five km, depending on the type of gun.

Desert combat is characterized by mobile, not stationary combat. What will dictate the dimension of movement in battle in the Gulf will, apparently, be the quantity of American forces. The American Air Force can operate freely in the region, but after aerial bombing, ground forces must unfurl the flag in the occupied areas. Therefore, it now seems that the Americans do not have enough forces to compete with the Iraqis on the ground.

[Gonet] Which battle techniques are used in the desert?

[Qahalani] The defensive technique in desert warfare is mobile defense. It is referred to as flexible defense, which is not caught up in outposts, but skips from position to position in an effort to block the enemy. In an attack it is necessary to reveal the weak points of the enemy. A large number of flank attacks, breaching of weak points, great usage of the air force and artillery, come before the assault.

[Gonet] How can the Americans fight in the heat of the Saudi desert?

[Qahalani] I do not ascribe great importance to desert heat, though it does make fighting more difficult. One must remember, that when we fight, the body trembles from fear, then cold, even if it is very hot outside. There are hardships from waves of heat that form clouds and make it very difficult to see, and from mirages. This affects both sides, though this is not what decides the battle.

[Gonet] Which of the two sides has the advantage in ground combat?

[Qahalani] The balance in armor consists of quantities of tanks, more than quality of tanks. From the standpoint of quantity—the Iraqis have a significant advantage. It should be remembered that in contrast to the almost 1000 tanks, most of which are T-72's, which the Iraqis have positioned on the border with Saudi Arabia, the Americans have only about 150 M-1 tanks, and a few dozen M-60 tanks.

Only the two tanks from the first series, the American M-1 (Abrams) tank, and the Soviet T-72 of the Iraqis, are equivalent. The other tanks are not decisive and their influence in battle will be negligible. When technical data is considered, the M-1 has an advantage over the T-72. This is a very fast tank, with high mobility, a high rate of fire, and very good armor. The T-72 is also a very good tank, and its advantage over the M-1 is that it has a very

low profile and its camouflage blends in with the environment. I do not ascribe great importance to the qualitative difference between the two tanks; therefore, the most important thing is the man operating the tank. In the Yom Kippur War, I fought in Centurion tanks against T-62 tanks that were undoubtedly preferable, from the technical aspect; however, despite all this, we won. The Soviet T-62 and American M-60 are similar tanks, but the T-62 is from an inferior series whose production has ceased, so here also the American tank has the advantage. The Soviet T-55 tank comes from an older generation, with a 100 mm gun that has almost ceased being used as an assault battle tank.

ISRAEL

Scenario for Solution of Gulf Crisis Offered

90p40134A Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew
24 Aug 90 p 1B

[Text] So how do they get out of this? How do the Americans achieve all their goals in a confrontation with Iraq with a minimum of blood-letting, specifically with minimal harm to those civilians taken hostage, and to the petro-industrial infrastructure in the Persian Gulf? Commentators, journalists, and everyday people are trying to answer this question. For the purpose of this analysis we interviewed a number of people (all of them, because some are military, were guaranteed anonymity) who have familiarity with the topic from various sides. There was not a decisive response, but perhaps a general direction.

It is first necessary to define the goals of the United States. These, as defined by President George Bush, are:

A. Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

B. Restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait.

C. Defense of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

D. Safe release of hostages.

In addition to these, there are undefined goals being sought without which it would be impossible to realize the defined goals:

E. Liquidation of Saddam Husayn's rule in Iraq.

F. Liquidation of Iraq's war-menace potential including its complete nuclear and chemical capability, mortal strikes on its air force and, if possible, its armor. The assumption is that if this happens, no country in the world will aid Iraq in rebuilding its power. Therefore, Iraq must be left with enough power to deter Iran, but it must be assumed that the Iranians will exploit the opportunity of a weak Iraq in order to interfere. Also, a strong Iran is a threat to global interests in the Persian Gulf.

For the purpose of the analysis below, the political option is being ignored. Negotiations without a perceptible demonstration of real power necessitate a certain compromise within the framework of defined goals. More importantly than this: Negotiations are being conducted with Saddam Husayn—what is being said is that there is no change to guarantee the achievement of goal "E", and the chances of achieving goal "F" are approaching zero. Without achieving these two goals, the region will continue to be threatened. It is impossible to withdraw forces and to return life to normal in a reasonably short period of time.

Most of those interviewed drew on the assumption that time is working in Saddam Husayn's favor, and that he knows this and is therefore not willing to initiate military action. Time is working in his favor because of several considerations: First, to cast doubt on American durability and the ability to absorb hardship for a length of time, with anxiety growing for the hostages and the front line troops. Second, waiting costs a great deal of money. Third, a weakening of the international front is reasonable. Fourth, with the passage of time, Saddam Husayn's position in the Arab world will grow stronger, and there is the danger of the power structure in Jordan and perhaps additional Arab powers disintegrating.

The majority of those interviewed maintain that if Iraq attacks, this being irrational, it will not exploit its NBC [nuclear, biological, chemical] capabilities, which are banned. The United States will not hesitate to take drastic and far-reaching measures including tactical nuclear weapons. It is doubtful it will use these means of self-defense except at the point of absolute despair, in a test of psychological integrity with the invaders. This assumption dictates that American military activity which leaves Iraq a measure of confidence will double the preference for a war of life and death.

Most of those interviewed believe that the greatest imminent danger is to the hostages. If they are in fact being dispersed to strategic targets—and this must be assumed—they are likely to be bombed. They are also likely to be victims for trial and lynching should any military operations be undertaken, even if they are not concentrated at those points where they are likely to be dispersed as human shields for strategic bombing.

Most of those interviewed, particularly those who are military, emphasized that it is difficult to assess the situation and to choose the best course of action when they do not have military or other forms of intelligence. Again, there is the assumption that the Americans are holding this intelligence, although they point out that the CIA and the American military are supplied principally with technical intelligence that is gathered through technological means. They have almost no intelligence gathered through human methods. They apparently have no agents in the area, and certainly not in Saddam's closed circles. On this issue, foreign sources say, only Israel may have this capability. Perhaps a great capability.

Given these reservations, most of those interviewed voted for the preferred American option: exploiting its clear, distinctive air superiority. This was generally acceptable to the various people interviewed. The preferred course of action was as follows: Americans must create an aerial provocation in order to destroy most of the Iraqi Air Force either by aerial combat or while on the ground, as the Israelis did on that morning in the 1967 War. The matter also requires neutralizing the Iraqi air defense command. This is possible. Studies by aerial combat experts bring to light the technological and numerical superiority that the United States can bring to bear in the air in a short time. It is necessary to act against Iraq in its sphere of clear superiority: with better planes and pilots (though they do not have up-to-date combat experience) and principally through sophisticated armament.

The American, Saudi, and other planes in the area will also be charged with stopping Iraqi ground forces. It is very important to stop ground threats, say the experts, though victory must be expressed in the end with a tangible ground seizure of Kuwait. If the Americans succeed in controlling the air, it will be possible through an ultimatum, backed by the air force working against carefully chosen military ground targets, to force the Iraqis to withdraw and to force them to sit at the negotiating table, under American terms. No one wants to raise the issue of what happens if the United States fails in aerial combat.

Likewise, the petro-industrial infrastructure throughout the Gulf must be defended against air strikes. Missile attacks are not particularly worrisome because of the limited number of missiles in Iraqi hands, and because of the relatively backward technology of these missiles. In most instances, they will cause no harm.

In addition to this, various experts propose that not too many ground forces be concentrated in Kuwait, so they can be used against Iraqi forces. If the Iraqis want to respond by ground, they must keep themselves within distance for short-range chemical weapons (such as artillery) and establish supply lines when possible. This in itself will be the decisive factor in ground combat if it should develop. But total ground combat must be prevented.

Additionally, a high state of readiness must be maintained to prevent terrorist attacks against Americans and vital petroleum installations. An attack such as this would not decide the battle, but could confuse things and damage morale—especially in the rear.

It should be emphasized that this analysis is simple in its many components. This is the nature of armchair analysis based on fragmentary information, well-known assumptions that perhaps do not add anything, and even wishful thinking.

Interior Minister's Advisers Profiled

91AE0001B Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (Weekend Supplement) in Hebrew 14 Sep 90 p 3B

[Article by Menahem Rahat]

[Text] The Minister of Interior, "Rabbi" Aryeh Der'i, is not the leader of a hasidic court, and not even a rabbi. However, he already has a court. This court, which is near the interior minister's bureau in Building No. 2 in the government campus in Jerusalem, was very perturbed this week by background information concerning the investigation and arrest of seven of the minister's aids and advisers who are senior members of the court.

If we adopt the language that is customary in the world of hasidic masters and their courts, it would be necessary to say that "the master's confidants" can be divided into several circles. The first of them is the circle of those who "sit in front in the court." Several of them were in the headlines this week as a result of being summoned to the police for questioning. Three in particular stand out: Tzvi Ya'aqobson, the only person questioned who remains in police custody after the first interrogation; Yosy Shvinger; and David Milgrom. Prominent aids in the second circle include devoted loyalists, such as attorney David Glass, who is a former Knesset member for the NRP [National Religious Party] and a member of the Labor Alignment; Dov Kahat, the director general of the Interior Ministry; Yomtov Ruven, the advisor for settlement and "seminary" affairs; and attorney Rabbi Simha Meron, the legal advisor of SHAS [Sephardi Torah Guardians], who recently distanced himself from Der'i.

There are also those who are outside the court, "mere" confidants, such as attorney Ya'aqov Weinroth, who is now defending the minister and is considered a professional jurist; the spokeswoman for the Interior Ministry, Tova Elinson, "a civil servant" from the days of Dr. Borg and Rabbi Peretz; the five Reichman brothers, whose closeness to Rabbi Shakh has brought them close to Der'i; economist Shalom Ya'aqobson, and others.

Their common denominator, and that of others in and around the court is that they are Ashkenazim. Is that surprising? Not to members of the court. One of the senior members of the court, Yosy Shvinger, stated this week: "That only proves that SHAS is far from being ethnocentric. Minister Der'i chooses his people not according to their origin, but their abilities."

An additional motive to the recruitment of those who are not STs [sefardim tehurim] (i.e., pure Sephardim, as Sephardic extremists are want to call themselves), is perhaps psychological. In the vicinity of Minister Der'i, we heard this week, perhaps in a humorous vein, the following explanation: "After four years of being aides and servants of the "vuzvuzim [a term applied to Ashkenazim, in parody of their accent]," the time has come for the latter to serve."

However, SHAS is not adopting ethnic discrimination. Der'i's court also includes Sephardim, and were it not for their names being in the headlines this week because of their arrest, they could have conceivably continued to remain in the shadows until reaching retirement age. The list of persons questioned at the police this week also included Avner Kohen, David Yifrah, and Yafa Kohen, all of whom are confidants of the minister to one degree or another and are numbered among the bureau's team.

Who are the members of Der'i's court?

Tzvi Ya'aqobson, whom everyone calls Tzviqa, is the dominant member of Der'i's court. He is active everywhere, loyal to Der'i, a confidant of Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, the secretary of the faction in the Knesset, and a journalist for 'ET-MATZU' [Current Time]. He serves several masters. Ya'aqobson is regarded as Der'i's shadow, always appearing next to or behind him. A man for all seasons. Officially, he is defined as the secretary of the SHAS faction in the Knesset. He is in fact much more. He is the man with whom one consults before raising any matter on the Knesset agenda, any question in the Knesset, and any draft law. He is a secret adviser. He also coordinates between the faction and the minister, who is not a Knesset member. He was the only person whom the police decided to keep in custody at the conclusion of their investigation.

Ya'aqobson, 31, is married (his wife, Ester, is the daughter of Rabbi Tzvi Tawsqi, the director of the Neve-Aretz institutions in B'er-Ya'aqov) and the father of six (aged two months to six years). In the minister's bureau, he is described as being responsible for handling public requests. Actually, he handles the personal appeals of persons of the Haredi [Orthodox] sector. In this capacity, he has accumulated great power. Anyone seeking a "personal favor" from the minister, any conceivable sort of aid or help, has gone through Ya'aqobson.

He is now suddenly being mentioned in connection with several affairs that border on "personal favors," such as the claim that he exerted great pressure on officials of Israel's embassy in the Philippines to return the Israeli passport that they had confiscated from Rabbi Beny Ohna, who moved from Israel to Manila to serve there as the rabbi of the Jewish community, and whose stay abroad was obviously illegal, because he evaded serving in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. According to the news, he even changed his name to Hen to make it difficult for Army authorities to find him.

Ya'aqobson is also very close to 'Ovadia Yosef, which grants him great power. Throughout the negotiations to form a coalition, it was Tzviqa who welcomed those coming to the rabbi's house. When a delegation of writers led by S. Yizhar arrived at the rabbi's house to convince him to go support the Labor Alignment, it was Tzviqa who descended on them and explained that the rabbi was not at home.

These activities alone make up more than a full-time position, but not for Tzviqa. He also writes a regular column for the weekly of the Hasidim of Belz, HAMAHANE HEHARIDI [The Haredi Camp], and from time to time, he sends articles he has written under different pen names to the daily YETED NE'EMAN [Faithful Stake].

To accomplish all of these tasks and assignments, Ya'aqobson works around the clock. At 2:00 AM he is still at work. The beeper on his belt never stops signalling. Cordial with everyone, he has endless patience and is always smiling.

Tzviqa is the son of Rabbi Moshe Ya'aqobson, the rabbi of Beersheva and a righteous, upright person in the full meaning of the word. The father is a supporter of Darkhey No'am [Ways of Kindness]. Despite his affiliation with the extremist Lithuanian camp (headed by Rabbi Shakh), he refrains from holding demonstrations against the profanation of the Sabbath in B'er Ya'aqov. He lives in harmony with his environment, making appearances to give the benediction at public occasions, and even at Zionist events, such as Independence Day, which others of his circle consider taboo.

However, the crowning achievement of his activities is the establishment of an extremely flourishing Haredi educational village in B'er Ya'aqov. In a city of 6,000, he established Institutes for Glorifying, attended by 700 students. He gathers for placement at his institutes, boys and girls who are primarily from broken homes, most of them from eastern [afro-asiatic] communities.

Tzviqa Ya'aqobson is considered the "black sheep" among Rabbi Ya'aqobson's six sons (he has two daughters), because he is the only one who did not become a Torah scholar whose main occupation is study. He too studied in yeshivas, but he was captivated by public service and landed in the Knesset, around the time that SHAS was established in 1984, as a writer for HAMODI'A [The Informer] who signed his articles H. Tzvi Polk (his mother's maiden name). When SHAS reached the Knesset, its Knesset members were unknown and disoriented. Tzviqa stationed himself at their side and led them, until they decided to appoint him secretary of the faction. Later, the then Interior Minister, Rabbi Yitzhaq Peretz, appointed him as his personal spokesman. In the Interior Ministry, he became familiar, from up close, with the young director general, Der'i, and they have since been inseparable.

Yosy Shvinger, 29, married, father of two, came to Der'i from the Lithuanian 'Ateret Yisra'el Yeshiva. Shvinger also began his path in Rabbi Peretz' domain. Peretz sought "an energetic, devoted" person. After Peretz' first resignation from the interior minister's post due to the Suzanne Miller affair, Shvinger remained in the ministry at the side of its director-general, Der'i, who became the de facto acting minister. He has since become a personal aide to Der'i.

Shvinger is modest and tries not to be conspicuous in the field. He accompanies Der'i on his professional and political campaigns and tours. He is inundated with public requests submitted to the ministry, and his main job is to shield the minister from "pests." Many in the Haredi public, who view the minister as "a faithful friend," have become disappointed to find Shvinger always blocking their way to the minister. Shvinger is always dressed in a well-cut grey suit, and wears a velvet yarmulke, and, recently, a sparse beard as well—Shvinger knows "how to defend" his minister.

He also stands between the minister and the media and screens press requests. He himself is well positioned in the media world, being, to this day, the policy-political correspondent of YETED NE'EMAN, under the pen name of Y. Yerushalmi.

David Milgrom, 39, father of 11, is a thick-bearded Jew with the appearance of one who grew up in the Haredi world, although he came to Der'i from the ranks of Hapo'el Hamizrahi [The Eastern Worker]. In his youth, he wore a knitted yarmulke, and studied in the Yavne state religious school in Ra'anana. His parents are loyal members of the national-religious movement and live to this day in the 'Etziyon Neighborhood of Hapo'el Hamizrahi in the city.

After completing primary school, he was sent to a modern-Haredi Yeshiva, Hayishuv Hehadash, in Tel Aviv, which combines Talmudic and secular studies. The head of the yeshiva, Rabbi Qolodtzqi, directed the graduates of his yeshiva to higher yeshivas. David Milgrom thus found himself in the Ponivzh Yeshiva. Minister Der'i is also the product of a state religious education, from which he came to the Haredi world.

Milgrom, who is currently the advisor for municipal affairs and a candidate for the position of deputy director general, is the liaison between the ministry and Rabbi Shakh. The venerable rabbi indeed compelled Der'i to appoint Milgrom to be at his side. To this day, Rabbi Shakh's door has always been opened to him. He is described as a fair man and as a "bulldozer" in work, who nonetheless remains in the background. He is regarded as brilliant and having a good head on his shoulders. Although he came to the ministry without any formal qualifications, he has learned the material so quickly that he was selected to be in charge of handling the ministry's professional affairs, including preparing Interior Ministry material for meetings of the government.

Milgrom was sent once by Rabbi Shakh to revive the small Haredi community in Yeruham, when it was experiencing a crisis stemming from the death of its leader, Moshe Shnitzer, in a car accident. The community, which was on the verge of breaking up, recovered by virtue of him. He set up his household in Yeruham and established Torah and charity institutions in the city. After completing the mission, he returned to Jerusalem. He is welcomed not only in the Lithuanian yeshivas, but also in the Hasidic and Sephardic yeshivas. In the court of Rabbi Shakh, he was defined this week as "an upright Jew." In the Interior Ministry, he was described as "having a good head." At the ministry, it is stated that "he has complete mastery of the material. His memory is phenomenal. A high I.Q. A pleasant-mannered, modest boy."

Milgrom accompanies Minister Der'i in his professional appearances in the Knesset. But he leaves the limelight to the minister. He stations himself on the periphery of the plenum hall, in the advisors' section, and waits there quietly. When the minister is immersed in political consultations, he retires to a distant table in the Knesset cafeteria. Usually, he prefers to sit alone. He never stands out in the noisy cafeteria. Many Knesset members are unable to this day to identify him.

Yomtov Ruven, is 35, married, father of five, a resident of Qiryat-Gat, and a graduate of the Haredi Orah-Hayim Institute and the Agudat Yisra'el youth village, Hazon Yehezke'el. He served there as a teacher and also coordinated the Agudat Yisra'el Youth Movement in the southern part of the country.

Because of his familiarity with the problems of moshav settlements in the south, he was recruited to serve as adviser for the affairs of regional councils and agricultural settlements. For four months, he has also served as the deputy in charge of the southern district. In recent years, he has been considered an activist in SHAS.

Avner Kohen, is 40, married, and the father of three. He has an economic background and is the professional aide for municipal affairs in the minister's bureau. He is the only one there who still wears a knitted yarmulke. In the minister's bureau, they present him as proof of the fact that staff members are chosen according to professional, not ideological, qualifications. His father, an employee of the Jewish Agency, is still an NRP [National Republican Party] activist in Qiryat-Shmu'el in Haifa.

Kohen was brought to the ministry by the director general, Dov Kahat, with whom he studied in the same class. He initially worked in the office of the ministry's accountant. He later became responsible for handling and responding to the bureau's incoming mail. He is currently engaged in the affairs of the population administration, the local authorities, and planning and construction laws. In the Interior Ministry, it is claimed that he is not especially close to Der'i. "More than once, Der'i and his friends even mocked him," it was said in the ministry this week.

Yafa Kohen is the administrator of the minister's bureau. She came to the Interior Ministry in 1984, as the secretary and bureau chief of Rabbi Peretz. This was the first political appointment of SHAS in the government. She is the second of the 11 children of Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef. She is divorced, a mother, and a grandmother. In the minister's bureau this week, it was said that "Mrs. Kohen is the dominant personality in the bureau. She

manages it with a high hand and enjoys a firm position by virtue of herself and her family connections."

In addition to these, there are other circles. Some are in the ministry, and others are active outside it. Their common denominator, it is said in Der'i's environment, is that all of them are at the double "A" level, which is to say, Aryeh's people [both words beginning with the letter "A" in Hebrew].

Civil Defense Sirens, Gas Mask Acquisition

TA2310184A Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 23 Oct 90 p 1

[Article by Shmu'el Tal]

[Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has commissioned a civilian company to develop a siren, to be used in the event of a gas attack, that will emit a sound different from that used to signal a conventional attack. The siren will signal to people that they should head for high, sealed places.

In recent weeks residents of the territories have acquired thousands of gas masks imported by Arab merchants. Defense sources say that the acquisition of the masks, and the fact that they have not been used in demonstrations, indicates that the residents are relating seriously to the matter of protecting themselves from a chemical attack.

LEBANON

Tripoli Deputy Discusses Impact of Gulf Events on Country

90AE0328B London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 31 Aug 90 pp 25

[Interview with Dr. Hashim al-Husayni in Beirut; date not given]

[Text] In an interview with AL-HAWADITH, the Tripoli deputy, Dr. Hashim al-Husayni, highlighted the effects of events in the Gulf on Lebanon, and stated that Lebanon can "immunize" itself against the major negative effects of the Gulf crisis by enacting the constitutional and political reforms stipulated in the national reconciliation covenant.

Al-Husayni expressed his belief that the enactment of reforms can counter the impediments standing in the way of the legitimate government. The following is the text of the interview:

[AL-HAWADITH] Do you believe that recent events in the Gulf can influence the situation in Lebanon, and if so, to what extent?

[Al-Husayni] The painful events that the Gulf region has witnessed and is witnessing will inevitably leave many marks on the Lebanese situation, especially since this situation is still in the "intensive care" room. As an Arab state, Lebanon is inevitably affected by any event in the region, because the Arab states are like connected vessels. The volume of each one of them is affected by the volume and level of the other.

Even if the political effects have not completely emerged yet, it is possible to see two negative effects on Lebanon stemming from what happened in Kuwait, one political and the other economic.

Regarding the political effect, it can be said that the Lebanese problem has moved further down the list of priorities for international concern. It has thus become more difficult than in the past to take action in the foreign affairs sphere. This is indicated by [shift of concern to] the international multilateral mobilization that most countries of the world and international organizations have witnessed to treat the problem of what happened in Kuwait.

Regarding the economic influence, it is possible to see the effects of the great fear that gripped the financial market, and the need of the Bank of Lebanon to shut down transactions on the monetary market for days after the dollar exchange rate was opened to an unlimited ceiling, and after the Central Bank's intervention became futile due to the fever that seized the financial market.

In addition, a question can also be raised about the fate of the international support fund that the Supreme Arab Committee decided to establish, and the fate of the flow of foreign and Arab currency to Lebanon from Kuwait and the Gulf in general because of the Lebanese emigre communities there and the visible and invisible aid that the fraternal Arab countries had been providing to support Lebanon.

[AL-HAWADITH] How, in your opinion, is it possible to compensate for the effects of events in the Gulf on Lebanon?

[Al-Husayni] Total compensation for the effects of what happened is almost impossible. However, Lebanon can "immunize" itself against some effects and thus become better able to handle other possible effects. In this regard, I believe that the most important thing done by Lebanon through its deputies is to consolidate its domestic situation by expediting the establishment and implementation of the political reforms stipulated by the national reconciliation covenant that was reached in al-Ta'if. The establishment of reforms has ended the war phase in Lebanon and has ushered Lebanon into the framework of a phase of peace and security. If the government can end the state of war, even without entering the aforesaid peace phase, it will have made progress in the national salvation march.

[AL-HAWADITH] Do you believe that recent, rapid developments in the region require a delay in continuing the measures stipulated by the covenant, given that the foreign cover for completing these measures is wholly engaged in emergency matters?

[Al-Husayni] I assume that such a possibility is real. If that is the case, shall we stand with our hands tied as we wait for the "plague" to strike us?

I advocate immunizing ourselves and our homeland, even if through several "inoculations" that can confront the disease. One must aspire for God, the exalted and sublime, to be with him, because despair neither builds countries, nor rebuilds and refurbishes them.

[AL-HAWADITH] Can the current national reconciliation government undertake such a desirable task based on the analogy of its work for more than a half year?

[Al-Husayni] Why would it not be able?

The al-Ta'if Agreement is clear. What is required of the government does not go beyond translating the articles of the agreement into legal formulations. In this regard, let me state that the deputies succeeded in establishing constitutional reforms after they approved the al-Ta'if agreement on three consecutive occasions: once after reaching the agreement in al-Ta'if, once at the plenary session of the Chamber of Deputies at the al-Qali'at Airport, and once when the government was granted confidence at the Barak Shaturah session after the ministerial statement had been limited to adopting the implementation of the al-Ta'if Agreement.

If the economic situation does not permit the government to now turn toward issues that concern Lebanese citizens, the government is not excused from discharging its other commitments based on which it obtained confidence.

[AL-HAWADITH] Some observers believe that the success of the government's functioning does not measure up to the obstacles, whose size exceeds the government's capacity to deal with them. These obstacles include the Iqlim al-Tuffah war, and the continuation of the situation in the eastern part of the capital unchanged. What is your opinion on this statement?

[Al-Husayni] The Iqlim al-Tuffah war and the continuation of the situation in the eastern part of the capital without change are no doubt having a direct, negative effect on the governing process and the government. I believe that the cabinet has made resolutions to remedy these two situations.

However, recognizing this matter does not mean that the government will capitulate to these obstacles until they are gone, at which point the translation of the political reforms would begin. The establishment of reforms stipulated by the reconciliation covenant is an effective way to remove the obstacles that block the full implementation of the peace process. The establishment of the reforms means the start of zero hour for calculating the period stipulated in the covenant's article on "extending the state's sovereignty to all Lebanese territories." If the reforms are not established how would it be possible to disband the militias that oppose the legitimate government, inasmuch as the reconciliation covenant links the establishment of reforms with the implementation of the security plan, which stipulates the dissolution of the militias.

[AL-HAWADITH] How do you picture Lebanon's future in the light of the surprise developments that are looming in the region?

[Al-Husayni] I would say that Lebanon's future will be only as its people want it to be. If the crisis continues in our country for thousands of years, it will not eliminate our belief in the need for the return of a unified, sovereign, independent, Arab Lebanon.

True, these remarks are emotional. However, when did national issues have no need for emotions? Can a true national issue not be supported by the mobilization of sentiment? If one maintains otherwise, he must explain why countries make use of their anthems and stirring music.

That aside, I believe that it is no longer possible to believe that Lebanon has outlived the justification for its establishment. The major states believe that Lebanon is culturally justified and an international necessity in today's world. According to information made available to me recently, the major states have outlined a strategy in the region on this basis, and they have begun to deal with the Lebanese problem on this basis.

I therefore believe that Lebanon's future will be bright and will return to what the Lebanese hoped it would be. Achieving that depends primarily on our solidarity and unity. As long as we move quickly toward solidarity and unity, we will come closer to our goals. Perhaps therein lies our call for, and emphasis on, the need to quickly implement the articles of the national reconciliation covenant after the chamber approves it.

Ambassador Describes Relations With Libya

90AE0327A London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 24 Aug 90 p 23

[Interview with Raymond Ba'qalini, Lebanon's ambassador to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, by 'Abdallah al-Misallati: "Raymond Ba'qalini, Lebanon's Ambassador to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, Tells AL-HAWADITH, 'Lebanese-Libyan Relations Are Strong and Were Reinforced by President Harawi's Visit';" in Tripoli, Libya; date of interview not given]

[Text] Ambassador Raymond Ba'qalini, Lebanon's ambassador to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, has been transferred to another post. He will be leaving Tripoli, but his heart will stay in the Jamahiriyah where he has been representing his country for five years. During those years Ambassador Ba'qalini was the model of a successful diplomat. He put emphasis on improving relations between Lebanon and the Jamahiriyah, and he put special emphasis on improving relations between the Libyan people and the Lebanese people.

AL-HAWADITH met with Ambassador Ba'qalini before his departure and conducted the following interview with him.

[al-Misallati] You were entrusted with certain tasks when you were appointed Lebanon's ambassador to the Jamahiriyah. What were your expectations regarding the burdens that you would have to confront in connection with those tasks? What image did you have about the Jamahiriyah before you started working there?

[Ba'qalini] When I was appointed Lebanon's ambassador to the Jamahiriyah, my view of the future of relations between the two countries was somewhat clear. I am saying the future of relations because relations between the two countries had been tense after a period of time during which these relations went through crises that were rather severe. I remember well that at one time diplomatic relations between the two countries were almost broken. But we were always looking forward to the future and hoping that it would be better. Relations between the Libyan Jamahiriyah and the Republic of Lebanon are too numerous to mention now, and there are many similarities and even more links between the Libyan people and the Lebanese people. I was actually optimistic about relations between our two countries, and I emphasize that I was right in being optimistic. I had arrived in the Jamahiriyah at a time when difficulties were not out of the picture.

But let us be clear. At one time the number of Lebanese citizens who were employed in the Jamahiriyah was about 35,000. As you know, the movement of peoples from areas, countries, and states to other areas, countries, and states brings people together and binds them to each other. But because of a few Libyan measures, the number of Lebanese citizens in Libya declined to no more than 2,000. Naturally, we had to do something so that we can start building relations between the two countries once again. We thank God Almighty that Libyan leaders and the Libyan people were willing to go along. But it is the Libyan people and Libyan leaders who deserve most of the credit for strengthening the relations that exist today. They deserve more credit than the Lebanese state does because our country, unfortunately, is not functioning at full capacity.

As Lebanese citizens in Libya today, we are in fact enjoying all the rights that Libyan citizens enjoy. Today, Lebanese citizens are admitted into Libya at the airport, no questions asked. They live and work in Libya without any problems. I would estimate that the number of Lebanese citizens residing in Libya today is about 15,000. That alone indicates how calm and gratifying relations between the two countries have become. In addition, trade between the two countries started to improve, contacts have not been broken, and Lebanese delegations on all levels are always coming into Libya. After spending five years in Libya I believe that I can evaluate relations between the two countries by saying that they are very solid and that they have become even more solid after President Ilyas Harawi's visit to Libya. President Harawi was well received and welcomed by Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, his fellow Arab leader. That was the first step in what will become, God willing, a quest for continuing cooperation.

[al-Misallati] Were you able to get along with the Libyan people, and were you able to succeed in conducting your business as Lebanon's ambassador?

[Ba'qalini] Yes, yes. Yes, I did succeed more than you can imagine. This is what I have always been saying. It is a fact that the Libyan people have an unadulterated and a purely nationalistic faith in the pan-Arab view and in pan-Arab ideas. The Libyan people, who are the epitome of the kindness, gentleness, and hospitality with which we can describe all Arabs from the ocean to the Gulf, are pure and authentic Arabs. This was in fact the first observation I made after I came into direct contact with the Libyan people. I believe that the Libyan people are among the few peoples who see Lebanon as a whole, as an Arab country. The Libyan people do not discriminate at all between one religion and another or between one politician and another. Among the Libyan people pan-Arabism outweighs all the religious or factional contradictions in the Arab East. It is on that basis that we have always been received and welcomed by the Libyan people. It is important for me to affirm clearly and unequivocally that in the five years of my work in Libya I never met a Lebanese citizen who encountered a problem because he belonged to a certain sect or subscribed to a certain religion. Quite the contrary, Lebanese citizens are still being welcomed by the Libyan people who continue to be quite attentive to the Lebanese.

[al-Misallati] This means that you succeeded in conducting your business as Lebanon's ambassador to Libya, doesn't it?

[Ba'qalini] It is up to the Lebanese state to make such a statement or such an evaluation. It is the Lebanese state that can decide whether I succeeded or not. But I gained a great deal. I made many friends, and I gained a lot of experiences. I am in good spirits, and my sense of being an Arab has been heightened.

[al-Misallati] What role did you play in effecting closer relations between the Libyan and Lebanese people?

[Ba'qalini] At one point Lebanon had two governments. That period of time was extremely difficult. The part I had to play was that of explaining matters. Let me emphasize here the positive role that was actually played by the Jamahiriyah in understanding Lebanon's conditions and the divisions that existed in the country. Actually, the fact that the Jamahiriyah understood these matters made explaining the points of view easier for me. It is a fact that the recent stages we went through with the Lebanese crisis were difficult, but the Jamahiriyah looked at these matters with objectivity and understanding, and that did make my job easier. We had no crises, and matters to date have been quite good, thank God.

[al-Misallati] Is this treatment being reciprocated?

[Ba'qalini] It is difficult for me as an Arab, and I am speaking as a citizen, to accept the principle of borders and visas that citizens of Arab countries are required to obtain and to have when travelling from one Arab country to another. The proposition that Arabs should be able to travel freely between all the Arab countries is fundamentally logical. The Jamahiriyah acted on its own when it decided to consider all Libyan territory accessible to all Arabs. It opened its borders and exempted all Arabs from the need to apply for an entry visa. This was nothing new for Libya, which has always departed from ordinary and conventional ways of thinking. But Libya went beyond that: it took the initiative and it succeeded. Libya took a difficult risk in opening its borders to all Arabs. As diplomats, we did expect a few security problems to occur in Libya as a result of the influx of large numbers of Arabs into the Jamahiriyah. But it became evident to us recently that the Libyan administration was right. There were no incidents and nothing happened. Not only was this measure successful, it was also an excellent idea.

But in Lebanon the only problem that we have now regarding opening the Lebanese borders to Libyan citizens is just an administrative problem. Unfortunately, we in Lebanon are still subject to a few complicated administrative measures, but it is my hope that this matter will be settled quickly. Let me tell you that I suggested that the Lebanese state take the initiative and exempt Libyan Arab citizens from the entry visa requirement to reciprocate Libya's treatment of Lebanese citizens. I believe that this will happen soon, but, unfortunately, our domestic conditions are not allowing this to happen quickly. If I am told or asked to make a suggestion, and this is not my job, I would personally suggest that the competent Libyan departments file a request with the Republic of Lebanon and ask for reciprocal treatment.

[al-Misallati] What are your impressions of Libya and the Libyan people as you leave Libya?

[Ba'qalini] Regardless of the fact that I am a kindhearted and responsive individual, I would say that I have mixed feelings about leaving the Jamahiriyah. I am happy and also sad. I am happy because after five years I feel that I did what I was supposed to do. There were two aspects to the job I had to do. I had to pay attention to Lebanese citizens and I had to pay attention to the political relationship between the two countries. The other job I had to do was to explain the Lebanese question to the Libyan people. I am very happy to say that I believe I achieved some success in this regard.

It is a fact that one feels somewhat sad about leaving Libya. This is because Libya has a special nature that one carries with him wherever he goes. Libya is a beautiful, kind, and hospitable country, and its people are helpful and devout. The Libyan people are devout not only in a religious sense, but also in a pan-Arab sense. This is what matters most: whereas religious faith stems from the heart, nationalistic faith stems from the mind. In Libya I leave behind good memories and loyal, loving friends. Leaving Libya is not as easy as some people might think it is, but it is my only hope that my personal relationships with fellow Arabs in Libya will continue. And this is normal for an Arab diplomat who was given an opportunity to find out about the accomplishments of the revolution in Libya. Reference must be made here to the fact that Libya's accomplishments to date since the outbreak of the revolution have been tremendous. I would say that Libya's revolution set a very successful example for other countries. Fortunately for me, the relations I have in Libya enabled me to become informed about the industrial and productive power that exists in this beloved country. I personally gained vast experiences from Libya and this is important for every diplomat. I also made many friends in Libya, and I gained a great deal of economic, educational, historic, and cultural information.

Although I am leaving this beloved country, Libya will always be in my heart and on my mind. I have to confirm here the personal admiration I have for the leader of the revolution, Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. I admire him for his contributions and for the time, effort, personal health, and energy he gave up to build up this country, its productive capability, and its industrial strength. It is no secret that my admiration for al-Qadhdhafi as a leader involves many of his qualities and goes beyond admiring his statesmanship. I admire him as a thinker and an intellectual. Al-Qadhdhafi is a well-informed man; he is a man of thought, a revolutionary man. I congratulate the Libyans for having such a leader because the future is waiting to embrace them. I hope that the present fruitful cooperation between Lebanon, Libya, and the Arab countries will continue so that a better society can be built for each Arab citizen.

INDIA

Center Said Falling Apart

7 Oct 90 p 22

[Editorial entitled: "Suffocating Again"]

[Text] The V.P. Singh-headed Janata Dal rule at the Center is suffocating again. To revive it, its leaders are scampering, each to a different direction in search of an "accord"!

V.P. Singh's use of the Mandal Commission Report as a trump card to unpopularise Devilal resulted instead in an unexpectedly large-scale agitation in the north.

A delighted Chandrashekhar has promptly started to undermine the V.P. Singh government. At the same time, Devilal announced his resignation from the parliament and increased the tension within the party. His supporters started sounding the war-drums opposing V.P. Singh!

If this is the picture within the party, in the matter of the Ram Janmabhoomi, their political ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] has started serious activities, strangling the V.P. Singh government!

It had been hoped that this government, as the alternative to one by Congress, would function constructively, but what is happening in actuality? There is not a whisper about any nation developing schemes! The administrative machinery is inactive without an effective leadership.

The people have started lamenting aloud: "Whatever made us vote these people into office?"

Singh Asks States to Aid in Export Campaign

91AS0074A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 8 Sep 90 p 13

[Text] The Prime Minister Mr V.P. Singh has asked the state governments to gear themselves to step up the country's exports to tide over the difficult balance of payment position.

A copy of the letter written to chief ministers said accordingly, the Union government had pegged the 1990-91 target at Rs 37,360 [rupees] crore, representing 35 percent growth as compared to the previous year.

The copy released on Thursday said the government also intended to actively involve the state governments in export production and promotion efforts.

Due recognition was proposed to be given to states which are doing well in promoting exports, it said adding it proposed to discuss these issues in the meeting of the inter-state council.

The letter, said some short term measures for export of some agricultural commodities would be undertaken to achieve generation of foreign exchange in the immediate future.

The letter said a medium term strategy had been designed with the objective of increasing the country's share of exports to GDP [gross domestic product] and the share of India's exports to world exports to a level more appropriate to its capabilities.

It said constraints faced in the growth of export of major commodities had been studied and certain decisions had been taken to remove such constraints.

Meanwhile, estimates reveal that the country's deficit in U.S. dollar terms during April-July this year was more or less at the level prevailing during the corresponding period last year.

Also, exports in July had recorded a higher growth at 24.3 percent compared to the preceding months of the current financial year.

The letter said, to ensure rapid development of deep-sea fishing industry, an empowered committee of secretaries had been constituted to take quick decisions on various aspects relating to the industry.

It said it had also been decided to liberalise the debt-equity norms for diversified fishing vessels of 30 metres and above from the existing 3.1 to that not exceeding 6.1 of the total project cost.

The letter said there was at present a very large balance of committed but unutilised external assistance.

A large part of this was in the form of highly concessional assistance which was exclusively available for projects in the social sector and for programmes structured for a direct impact on poverty.

It had been decided that these projects should be closely monitored and there should be timely procurement action by project authorities.

The planning commission would also take necessary steps to ensure earmarking of adequate plan provision to provide the counterpart rupee funding particularly in the state sector.

Certain other procedural changes will be made to ensure a quicker disbursement of committed external assistance, the letter said.

It said government had also approved the proposal of the J & K State Industrial Development Corporation for the manufacture of 6 lakh coloured picture tubes per annum with an investment of Rs 85 crore.

Quick estimates indicate that the balance of trade deficit during April-July 1990 is Rs 2,327 crore as against Rs 2,155 crore during April-July 1989.

The balance of trade deficit showed an increase of 8 percent during this period.

Exports for the period April-July 1990 were estimated at Rs 9,928 crore as against Rs 8,061 crore in April-July 1989, a growth rate of 23 percent.

Imports during the period April-July 1990 are estimated at Rs 12,255 crore as against Rs 10,216 crore in April-July 1989. The growth rate works out to 20 percent.

Bill To Establish Broadcasting Corporation Passed

91AS0077A Madras THE HINDU in English 6 Sep 90 p 1

[Text] The Rajya Sabha today approved the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Bill, 1990 to free the electronic media from Government control after rejecting by voice vote three motions moved by the Congress(I) for referring the Bill to a joint select committee of the House and incorporating two amendments given by members of the same party.

The passage of the Bill appeared uncertain with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr N.K.P. Salve, categorically declaring in the House on Tuesday while initiating the debate, that his party rejected the Bill "lock, stock and barrel" and would press for a division on the motions for referring it to the select panel.

The suspense on the fate of the Bill continued throughout the eight-hour long debate as Treasury and Opposition benches had mustered all their strength for any eventuality by issuing whips to its members.

The air cleared only when the Deputy Chairman, Mrs Najma Heptullah put the motions to a voice vote and it became clear that the Congress(I) had decided not to press for a division. A majority of the Congress(I) members remained silent when the voice vote was taken.

The first amendment moved by Mr P. Shiv Shanker and Mrs Jayanti Natarajan (Cong-I) sought to make the recommendations made by the three-member Prasar Bharati selection committee, headed by the chairman of the Council of States, binding on the Government. The selection committee is to recommend a panel of nine names for the Board.

The second amendment moved by Mr B.A. Masodkar and Prof. C.P. Thakur (Cong-I) sought to bar anyone who ceases to be a citizen of India from being a member on any of the bodies of the Corporation. The Bill would now go back to Lok Sabha in view of the two amendments.

Simply Agreed

The Congress(I) members who had proposed the bulk of the 100-odd amendments chose to withdraw them after brief observations. Towards the end they simply agreed to withdraw their amendments thus allowing smooth passage of the Bill.

In his reply to the debate, the Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mr P. Upendra appealed to the Congress(I) not to press on the motion for referring the Bill to a select panel. The demand has been voiced to elicit expert opinion, but the present Bill has been amended on the basis of nine month long nation-wide debate and consultations with all political parties.

The Government was not rigid on the structure of the Corporation as envisaged in the present Bill and the Parliament can always amend it on the basis of experience gained.

With the approval of the Bill the National Front Government has fulfilled one of its major promises. Mr Upendra was hopeful that in the next six months the Government would be able to complete the procedural aspects on setting up the Prasar Bharati Corporation and promised to keep in mind all suggestions made by the members at the time of framing of rules to be followed by various bodies envisaged under the Corporation.

Mr Upendra said that while framing the Bill, the Government had to reconcile to two extreme viewpoints. While one school of thought advocated complete autonomy to the electronic media, the other was against unbridled autonomy.

Two Extreme Views

"We had to reconcile with these two extreme positions and arrive at a consensus," Mr Upendra said and tried to allay apprehensions of members that the selection committee for the Prasar Bharati Board would be influenced by the Government nominee and said that the Government did not intend to appoint an official for the position. It would be a media expert.

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers has been made the chairman of the selection committee as the Government wanted a representative of Parliament to be associated with it.

In response to demands from members that the Board should have representatives of women, weaker sections and minorities the Minister said the composition of the Board should be left to the selection committee. All directives from the Government to the Prasar Bharati Board shall be in writing and the annual report of the Directors of the Corporation will be placed before Parliament.

On the objection raised by Mr Salve to transferring of all assets to the Corporation as base capital, the Minister said the Government would specify the terms and conditions on the use of these assets and make sure of their safety.

In response to the concern expressed by Mr J.P. Mathur (BJP) on increasing commercialisation of the electronic

media he said the Government reserved the right to determine the proportional time of advertisements.

He assured the House that any decision of the 22-member Parliamentary Committee to oversee the functioning of the Corporation would be binding on the Government. The committee was essential as the Corporation will have accountability to Parliament. On the superannuation clause, the Minister said it was incorporated to take care of any contingency which might arise in future.

Rajiv Gandhi Interviewed on Mandal Report, Other Matters

Correspondent's Interview

91AS0036A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 2 Sep 90 p 9

[Article by Dileep Padgaonkar. Interview of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on 30 Aug; place not indicated; words in italics as published; quotation marks as published]

[Text]*Like General De Gaulle's exile before he returned to office in 1958, Mr Rajiv Gandhi clearly looks upon his stint in the opposition as an interregnum, the better to prepare his return to South Block. The months out of power have enabled him to reflect on his errors and inadequacies, to focus his goals more sharply, to bring a sense of realism to his vision about the future of the state and society in India.*

As this extended conversation with him reveals, the results of his labours are as yet tentative. To his interlocutor Mr Gandhi still appears to be well-meaning, quietly confident and determined. He still exudes a sense of earnestness. But he no longer holds in contempt the seamier yet indispensable aspects of politics: the manipulative skills, the ruthlessness, the cynicism, the tactical finesse and the strategic daring.

This is easily explained. Mr Gandhi has to reckon with a prime minister who has demonstrated, often dramatically, a political flair of an exceptionally high order. In effect, Mr V.P. Singh has seized the initiative on virtually every front, ever since he ousted Mr Devi Lal from the cabinet, it is he who has set the agenda on the political scene and indeed redefined the parameters of political activity in the country.

This is why the Congress, as the main opposition party, has appeared to be on the defensive. Its record in Parliament has been mixed, to put it mildly. Mr Gandhi himself has not earned laurels as a parliamentarian. All the same, he can legitimately take credit for the fact that his personal popularity had appeared to grow in the wake of his country-wide tours, before the prime minister sprung the Mandal surprise.

At any rate, nothing has threatened his leadership of the Congress. His relations with Congress chief ministers remain cordial if not effusive. More than anything else, however, the stand he has taken on the Mandal commission and on the Ayodhya controversy—or rather the stand that he persuaded his party to take often by resisting strong pressures from some of his senior colleagues—indicates a slow but certain return to thee time-tested policies of the Congress: anti-casteism and anti-communalism.

If these policies still appear to be somewhat ambivalent and at times even lacking in consistency, the reasons have to be sought in Mr Gandhi's keener appreciation of the complexities of India and of the widely divergent interests of its electorate. Some may regard this as a euphemism for expediency. Perhaps. Still it is difficult to escape the impression that the former prime minister is well and truly putting his act together to prepare for the next poll whenever the wily current prime minister chooses to announce it.

General De Gaulle had to wait for 12 years to end his exile. Mr Gandhi, though he makes strenuous efforts not to display impatience, clearly thinks and acts as if his waiting period will last as many months. Excerpts from the conversation held over two hours on 30 August:

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*What has this period in the opposition taught you about yourself, about the Congress party and about the country generally?*

[Mr. Gandhi] It has given me time to think over what we achieved and what we did not achieve in many areas; what we wanted to do, what we manage to do, what we did not manage to do; to some degree, why we did not manage to do it, what went wrong, where the communication links broke down. Then we have tried to figure out how we can correct that and set things in order so on a future opportunity you are more ready to cope with it.

Part of the problems stemmed from a lack of preparation for the role. You had a lot of ideas in the sense that you wanted to do this and that. But when you actually got in, there were suddenly a lot of other priorities. On the other hand you did not know how you would get the machine to implement your ideas. Because you did not know the machine well enough, you did not understand how it functioned, what were its strengths and weaknesses. That was the major problem—the machine, the bureaucracy, the government machine. What we are doing now is going through an exercise in the party of producing policies on various issues which we will try and put on a time-bound schedule so that when we get another chance we are ready to implement them. We have gained experience of how we slipped up in the past, how we were sabotaged in the past and how to avoid that now.

Overall Failure

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*In some of your recent interviews, you have mentioned "communication failures" as being responsible for your party's defeat. That sounds a bit simplistic. What about your own failures of perceptions and actions?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I am not excluding that. Communication failures were part of the overall failures. I'm talking of two-way communication failure, our failure to communicate and our failure to receive communication.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*This communication issue is important because when you first assumed office your image was one of a moderniser. That image got sullied on account of various scandals and compromises. One got the impression that you had got sucked into the machine. Have you jettisoned the role of the moderniser?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Not at all. That is the most important thing to do. But let us get back for a moment to '84. Most people seem to forget what the problems in '84 were. The biggest challenge then was to control all the divisive forces in the country, to hold the country together. The main issue in those elections was: will we see India like it is today in the future too? We delivered on that.

The next big challenge—which I understood better only when I got into government—was economic development. We were not able to achieve all that we had promised. But if you look at what we actually achieved, you will see that we have done better than what governments had been able to do before. On fundamental promises we delivered. For example, we set a target of reducing the poverty line by '90 and its elimination by the turn of the century. The latest figures have just come in for 1987-88. The poverty line is down to 27 percent, perhaps 26 percent, very close to the target. On an issue as important as removing mass poverty—this, I think is an achievement. So we did deliver on this score. But the aspirations had gone too far. What I discovered in government was that no country functions as an entity in itself. You are part of our region, you're part of the world. Unless things are happening in your region of the world which are attuned to the visions that you had in mind, things are not going to work inside your country in that direction.

Responsible Party

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*To return to the question of your work as a moderniser: The CWC [Congress Working Committee] adopted a resolution on the Mandal commission only on 30 August. Why did it take so long for your party to respond to the initiative taken by the Prime Minister?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I responded the next day at a party meeting. Then the Prime Minister brought in another set of reservations. We were waiting for the government to sort of settle down. We did not know whether the Prime Minister would invite us for talks. He did not do so.

On the other side, in the country, it became a confrontationist issue. We had a choice: we could jump in on either side, or we could jump in to try and cool things down. As a responsible party we have to jump in to cool things down. It would have been the easiest of things to take things up; we could really have had a ball on this. We avoided that. We waited because if we had intervened to end the conflict too early, our initiative would have been thrown out. We were trying to get the timing right. Our resolution is not as strong in some areas as I would have liked it to be. But it is a majority view of the working committee. I feel it is resolution which will cool things down, help pull things together and end this caste war that has started off."

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*To promote social equality entirely on a caste basis?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I react very strongly. I don't think we can do it. We destroy our country, we lose our goals. One part of what we set out for ourselves is a classless and casteless society. Having said that, we have to look at the situation today. Things have slipped up in the past. We have come to define backward groups and classes as backward castes. This is a reality. You can't today pretend that it has not happened. So you have to move in a manner that you do not go down that road. You have to move out of that position. This is what we have tried to do in our resolution. We have broadened the definition. We have said that socially and economically backward classes are not backward castes. We must broaden the definition to include groups who are not defined by caste."

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*It was Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's view that the greatest achievement of the Constitution was that it regarded the individual and not the village, community or caste as its basic unit. Over the past 40 years this seems to have changed.*

[Mr. Gandhi] No, I don't think this has changed. I feel that responsible people in the country still feel very much that this must be our goal. What has happened in between is that a large number of our people have not moved away from the caste system. Indeed they have sometimes bolstered it for political or economic gain or aggrandisement.

Change of Stance

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Why do you think the prime minister chose to announce the implementation of the report now? The report existed throughout your period in office and he was part of the government?*

[Mr. Gandhi] If I remember rightly, he was chief minister of UP [Uttar Pradesh] when the report first came out. He opposed the report at that time. He opposed it when he was with us.

The only reason I can think of is that being an issue-based person, as he says, the issue of the day was Devi Lal's rally. The question before him was whether certain chief ministers would support Devi Lal in that rally or not. The decision was taken on the spur of the moment to keep his party from splitting.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*But surely the Prime Minister could not have ignored the implications of what he was doing?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I just don't understand. Because there are two parts to the problems with any such measure. The first is that there is strong opinion on both sides. There are those who say, 'You must help more and, therefore, we need more reservations.' Finally there are those who go to the extent of saying, 'Divide the whole 100 percent into categories.' There are strong disagreements between these two sides.

Anybody who is implementing these measures must realise that he has to lay the ground by a debate. And any such debate must involve major people concerned with the issue. We had a number of meetings with parties and states when we were in government. We found that it was much too tricky. The ground had not been laid for us to come out with a measure like this without causing a caste division. I just do not understand why he did this in such a rush, except for his internal party problems.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*But he says this is part of his party's election manifesto.*

[Mr. Gandhi] There were so many other things in the manifesto. If he was only worried about jobs, he should have first done something about the right to work. This does not give rise to social tensions. Yes, there would have been certain financial problems. But at least your society is cohesive.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*What then is the path chosen by the Congress as far as Mandal is concerned?*

[Mr. Ghandhi] Let me talk for myself because there are lots of views in the Congress. Two aspects have to be kept in mind. Today the major challenge, as I see it, for the nation is rapid development. If the nation does not move ahead at the fastest possible pace, we are going to miss out on the global changes that are taking place. If we are not on the scene as a major player very soon, we will not be a player at all. I don't know whether the time limit is one, two or five years. But that is about all. If we are going to get bogged down in other things, we are going to be in trouble.

Economic Factor

Hence, rapid development. Common wisdom is that you get meritocracy in all the right places and then everything will work very well. That is valid up to a point. Because if you think that meritocracy belongs only to certain groups, you create social tensions. Whatever speed is developed with meritocracy is reduced by such social tension. You must balance this by bringing more and more people out of their economic, social and educational backwardness. I would like to bring in the economic factor. Forty years ago, it may have been less of a factor. People then were very poor. Today it is a factor. People have come up. Alternative action has to be given to these disadvantaged groups so that they come up.

Where do you strike a balance? The supreme court has put it at 50 percent. The supreme court stand is just fine. We should have a certain part reserved as open which cannot be encouraged upon. I cannot speak of percentages, but 50 percent is a good starting point for the discussion. With the government's decision 50 percent has indeed become the starting point.

Then you get into the question: How do you ensure that those who get in through reservations are of the highest standards? If someone in the non-reserved quota is a 90 percenter, you do not want the person in the reserved quota to be a 40 or 50 percenter. You want to bring that up to 80 percent. And for this you take measures, economic and educational, to push up this percentage. But the government has thought nothing on this side. It has not thought of improving the economic, education and social standards of these classes. They have categorically said that they are not going to do this.

I think we should categorically demand not reservation in present institutions—because you are then dividing again—but new institutions, an increase in spending on education. We had set a target of 6 percent of the GDP [gross domestic product] for education. Let's try for that.

Let us also accept the fact that there are many in the OBC's [Official Backward Classes] who are not really backward. If we have someone who has been a cabinet minister with my mother, with me, for 15 years, can we rightly say that his family deserves reservations? I say no. There must be factors which eliminate such people. If someone from the backward group has the money to send his child to a private school, why does he need a quota if he can get good schooling at Doon, St Paul's Mayo, any public school.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA] *Or St Vincent's*?

[Mr. Gandhi] Or St Vincent's. Why should he want to bag a reserved seat? That should go to someone who deserves it. If you're a tax payer, why should you be counted as a backward? If you own land, property—the quality and quantity can be discussed—why should this not be treated as a disqualifier? You must say, once people achieve this, they disqualify, they do not come in the reserved category.

You will thus get more and more deserving people who will get help. You will get society into what can be broadly called the classes-casteless land.

Education Step

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Should this also be time-bound?*

[Mr. Gandhi] "It is difficult to say. Look at the United States. Their Constitution is 200 years old. It took a long time for blacks to get votes. Even today affirmative

action is needed for blacks. I don't say we need 200 years because human attitudes were different 200 years ago. It is going to be much faster today. I don't think we should set a limit. But in the meantime it should have been a system of elimination. For example, if a family has class-A government servants and if you take them out of the reservation system, you will come to the point where you can think of setting a time limit.

Another good measure—at least for the sake of argument—is the cut-off into universities in the open and reserved sectors. In the north, the cut-off between the open and the scheduled caste reserve is very wide. In the open it is 86 percent in some subjects, 84 in some others. In the reserved, it is as low as 55. The gap is large as long as the gap is large, one can assume that there is need for help because these students (in the reserved category) are simply not making it.

Compare that to Tamil Nadu. In that state, there was a difference of only 2 percent between the cut-off in the open seat and the backward reserve seat. The figure needs to be checked again. But at any rate the difference is minimal. When you come to that sort of equality in educational terms, you can start thinking of qualifying your affirmative action so that the really wreak benefit from it. Sons and daughters of engineers, lawyers, government servants, politicians, who get all the social or economic backing, may benefit and the really backward are left out. Maybe the system, over the past 20 years, has pulled the backwards up to the extent that in educational terms at least, they are equal to the others. That is the sort of indicator you can focus on to determine whether equality is achieved.

South Backward

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Yet the fact remains that large-scale reservations in the southern states did not provoke the kind of backlash that you now find in the north?*

[Mr. Gandhi] You must look at the lists. In the south, practically everyone is in the category of backwards. Very few groups are left out. This is why there was no conflict. The population break-up also has a very large percentage of backwards. But also if you look at the southern states, one of the answers given is that quality of administration will deteriorate.

Now I don't think you can count this as the sole factor for the quality of administration. There are so many other things also. But even if you want to look at that also—because the Prime Minister pointed out something in Parliament. He said in the northern states there is no reservation and 80 percent of them in the administration are forward castes. That is why there is so much of maladministration, corruption and bungling. So it is the upper castes and meritorious which are doing this.

Merit In All

I think this is a totally facetious argument. So many things are at work that you cannot start defining everything as caste. And if you are a casteist and that is what stuck in your mind, perhaps these are four priorities and you think like it. But in my mind there are other indicators and definitions which are much more important than just caste. And one more thing which we did include in the AICC [All India Congress Committee] paper: we must understand that when we talk of merit are we talking of merit of the two-year-old child, that is the inherent merit in a two-year-old child, or are we talking of the merit of somebody who has come through an educational process.

I think we can safely say that the average Indian is intelligent. There is tremendous merit in every child that is born. The question is how much opportunity is given to that child to develop that merit. And that is where opportunity comes in. If you were an urban dweller, even if the child does not go to school, there is so much going on around him (and) he learns a lot. Now you try to compare him to a child living tribe in the middle of Bastar jungles, Arunachal hills, or a distant village in the Garhwal hills, who also does not go to school. There is a tremendous difference.

Perhaps the schooling that the remote area will give the child will not even be up to the general knowledge the child in the urban area picks up by just being present there. So merit I think is there in everybody. You cannot say that this class or caste has merit and that does not. It is all over. It is just that opportunity is being given more to certain groups for historical reasons, for economic reasons and you must change that. It is also necessary to change that because if you want the nation to really get going you have got to make the best of your resources. And the biggest resource we have got is human resources.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Indian society has paid a terrible price for believing that merit is the attribute not of an individual but of a caste. It will now be paying an equally terrible price for believing that equality and need is not an attribute of an individual but of a caste or community.*

[Mr. Gandhi] I absolutely agree. That is why I am very clear that a caste definition of backward is not bad, it is terrible. The fact of life is that we have got it. I can only talk of today and five years hence. The fact of life is that it is there. Also every single judgment and I think every single report on backwardness has said class is not the sole determinant of backwardness. We all ended up by defining it as only caste. So the fact is today you have as the starting point a caste list which tells you (who are) backward. The ridiculous thing is that even those religions which do not have castes have been forced to have a caste so that they can be included in the list. We are telling Muslims that such and such group in the Muslim is a backward caste Muslim. Now you must get out of

this definition. You can get out of it by a number of ways. And it is necessary to go into that.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Is it your feeling that this is done to build up reliable vote banks?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I think politicians feel it. I do not think the voters vote on it.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Do you think Mr V.P. Singh will win votes because he is consolidating on the OBC factor, the Muslim factor and the Harijan factor, etc. etc.?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I think he is in for a rude surprise. Look at the last series of elections. There is a sort of watershed in our elections: (the one after) 1969 when there was a split in the Congress. Then '71, '77, '80, '84, '89. Were any of these won or lost on the caste slogan? Caste slogan is not new. Not one of them was won or lost on this slogan. And I go beyond that. Not one of them was won or lost on a religious slogan.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*And that brings us to what I think is your party's ambivalence on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute. I think in your interviews you had said that you were going to launch a mass movement to gain minority support. Would you lead this movement yourself or pass it on to one of the other leaders of the Congress?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I would lead it myself. Depending on where and what the situation is. But well, definitely, I will lead it myself.

SUNDAY Interview

91AS0036B Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 11 Aug 90 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, 10 August (PTI)—The Congress president, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has said mid-term elections will be held "early next year."

"But—and the but is important—that depends on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)," Mr Gandhi said in an interview to SUNDAY magazine.

Mr Gandhi said the BJP's recent statements suggested that it was preparing for an election.

In the course of his first formal interview since losing power, the Congress leader answered questions about the party's defeat, the Bofors issue, Kashmir, Mr V.P. Singh, Mr Arun Nehru, Mr Chandra Shekhar and other leading political figures.

Asked whether some members of the Janata Dal government were considering joining the Congress, Mr Gandhi said a number of people "have spoken to us."

On whether the Congress was "cultivation" Mr Devi Lal and Mr Chandra Shekhar and whether he would support a government led by the latter, he said "the question hasn't come to us."

"There is no need for us to change the view that we took in December that we would support a Janata Dal government," the Congress leader said.

He stressed his party had not voted so far against the Dal in Parliament on any substantive issue. "So long as the Dal chooses its own leader—whoever that is—we will continue the same scheme."

About the possibility of a "deal" with Mr Chandra Shekhar, he asked "Why should we do a deal with him. It doesn't benefit us in any way. We can only lose from making a deal with him. I've always been very clear about that."

When asked whether Mr Arun Nehru would be welcome in the congress, Mr Gandhi said, "That's an assessment the party will have to come. The question, however, hasn't come up yet."

Asked whether he thought that Mr Arun Nehru had "changed," Mr Gandhi replied that he did not know.

"I haven't met him for long enough to find out."

Mr Gandhi accused the Prime Minister of pandering to communalism. "He is pandering to the Hindu communalists. He is pandering to the Sikh communalists. He is pandering to the Muslim communalists.

On his party's defeat in the last elections, Mr Gandhi said there were a lot of reasons, the main ones being the opposition unity and the one-to-one fights. He added, Congress in-fighting, Babri Masjid issue, and Bhagalpur riots were also responsible for Congress' defeat. He owned responsibility for the party's defeat.

Mr Gandhi also said one of the things that went wrong in the last elections was communication. "We seemed to have lost contact with the people, media, certain groups of people who were influential in their own spheres, the middle class and other educated classes."

Replying to a question, he said the main reason for the 1984 election victory was his mother's assassination.

"I don't know whether it was sympathy. I think the nation really got shaken up...they looked for light in the darkness that they saw everywhere. And they saw that in the Congress," he said.

Blaming the National Front government for the volatile situation in Kashmir, he said, "As far as I am concerned, Kashmir has been lost by this government."

On whether Kashmir had been lost irretrievably, Mr Gandhi said "Oh I think it can be brought back, it's not irretrievable but if they go on drifting like this—and since Jagmohan has gone—it has been drifting, it will be lost."

He alleged that Mr Jagmohan wanted to bring in the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) as the new political force in Kashmir.

On the Front government's foreign policy, he said India had now become a "non-entity in international affairs. For example, we were a key player in Namibia. What's happened in Vietnam? We're just not there any more. In Fiji, we've been flung out. It couldn't have happened earlier," he claimed.

Mr Gandhi also spoke in detail about the parting of ways between him and Mr V.P. Singh.

Mr Gandhi said Mr V.P. Singh was perhaps conspiring to become the Prime Minister before he resigned from the Union cabinet in 1987.

He did not believe then that Mr Singh as his finance minister was conspiring against him, Mr Gandhi said.

Asked whether he believed it now, he said "Perhaps, yes."

Asked what changed Mr V.P. Singh's mind on the Bofors issue, especially after he had said "you were his leader and he was your supporter," Mr Gandhi said "I just don't understand."

More on SUNDAY Interview

91AS0036C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 11 Aug 90 p 1

[Interview of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi by Mr. Aveek Sarkar and Mr. Vir Sanghvi of SUNDAY magazine; date and place not given; words in italics as published; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, 10 August (PTI): The Congress(I) president Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has disclosed that some members of the present government have got in touch with his party with a view to joining it and that "they are not necessarily all ex-Congressmen."

In the course of a wide-ranging interview to Mr Aveek Sarkar and Mr Vir Sanghvi of SUNDAY magazine, the former Prime Minister also said that he bore no ill-will to his cousin and current Union commerce minister, Mr Arun Nehru, but that did not mean that he would be welcomed back into the Congress(I).

"That's a different question. There, it is not a question of whether I bear him ill-will. That's an assessment that the party will have to make. And there will be a lot of people who will say 'no' and a lot of people who will say 'yes.'"

[SUNDAY]*And what will you say?*

[Mr. Gandhi] The question hasn't come up (smiles).

[SUNDAY]*So you are not saying "no."*

[Mr. Gandhi] I'm not saying "yes." I'm not answering it (laughs).

When asked whether other members of the present government may also be considering joining the Congress, Mr Gandhi replied: "Well, a number of people have spoken to us."

[SUNDAY]*So you are in touch with them?*

[Mr. Gandhi] No, they are in touch with us.

[SUNDAY]*What's the difference?*

[Mr. Gandhi] The message came from them.

[SUNDAY]*Ajit Singh?*

[Mr. Gandhi] (Broad smile) Well, they are not necessarily all ex-Congressmen. But no comment on any names.

V.P. Singh: Mr Rajiv Gandhi said Mr V.P. Singh was perhaps conspiring to be Prime Minister even before he resigned from the Union Cabinet in 1987. He said that back then he had not believed that Mr Singh, his finance minister, was conspiring against him, but, asked whether he believed it now, Mr Gandhi replied, "Perhaps, yes."

Asked what changed Mr V.P. Singh's mind on the Bofors issue especially after he had said "you were his leader and he was your supporter," Mr Gandhi said, "I just don't understand. After we had a good talk, he was very emotional. He gave me a big hug and all that."

Jyoti Basu: Mr Gandhi acknowledged that his statement during the 1987 West Bengal Assembly election campaign that Mr Jyoti Basu had ruled Bengal for a long time and should now retire was "perhaps a bit juvenile."

Paper Reports, Comments on Rajiv Gandhi Pronouncements

More on TIMES Interview

91AS0076A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 9 Sep 90 p 11

[Article by Dileep Padgaonkar; interview of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi; date and place not given; words in italics and quotation marks as published]

[Text] *The first part of the interview with Mr Rajiv Gandhi published last Sunday focussed on the Mandal Commission. This second and concluding part covers the former Prime Minister's views on the economy, Centre-state relations and the Ayodhya controversy. Mr Gandhi also comments briefly on the Gulf situation, possibly of mid-term poll, Punjab and Bofors.*

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Before we get back to domestic issues will you say a word or two about the Gulf crisis?*

[Mr. Gandhi] There are two questions arising out of the Gulf. One is the takeover of Kuwait by Iraq. I do not think it is correct. Now having said that, you are faced with a fait accompli. How do you cope with it? And this is where I think India is totally out of the playing field. A

superpower confrontation is bad but a superpower cooperation can be even worse. Today we have a situation where country 'A' is deciding how a particular problem should be solved. I am not going into the merits of the solution. It may be right. But the UN should be taking that decision. The UN cannot be pushed into taking a decision. Which is what is happening today. And what is happening today is going to be the indicator of the future.

Are we going to have a particular country dictating to the world that this is how things should be sorted out? Are we going to have a country or a group of countries appoint themselves as global policemen? We cannot allow this to happen and I see that is exactly what is happening. And the sad part is that India is quiet. [THE TIMES OF INDIA]*In your recent statements you had said that you were going to launch a mass movement to gain minority support. Would you lead this movement yourself or pass it on to one of the other leaders of the Congress?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Depending on where and what the situation is. But well, definitely, I will lead it myself.

Social Tension

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Where do you stand now that 30 October is coming near?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Let me just reiterate what we have been saying right through. We have two options. The first option is an out of court settlement between all the parties. But I think it must be placed as number one.

If it does not work then the courts must decide. And pending a court decision there should be a status quo. The BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] challenge will have to be faced politically. And that is why we have taken it on. If, for example, the court gives one decision and a movement is sought to be developed to alter that decision, we will counter it with an equally big movement. The Congress will be there. I will be there myself.

But now a new point has come up. Up to a few months ago it was adequate to say, let the court settle the Ram Janmabhoomi dispute or let the normal system cope with the problem. "Not today. I feel because of the bungling and mishandling by the government we are suddenly faced with so much social tension. We have got scheduled castes being hammered by various people, we have got a forward-backward row, we have got a Hindi-English, north-south confrontation and, we have got religious confrontation.

"The time has come for us in the Congress internally to start discussing these things. On many of these issues, where a normal legalistic standpoint was adequate in the past, because of the tensions all round, I think a harder stand will be required now. But I have to talk to some more of our people before I could say so openly. I will try and see if I can manage something in the next 10-15 days.

No Deviation

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*On the larger issue of secularism, some elements in your party say that we have to take note of the fact that Hindus are hurt and angry and other elements say that the Congress should not deviate from its line of uncompromising secularism.*

[Mr. Gandhi] There is going to be no deviation. That is why I took such a strong line in the AICC [All India Congress Committee]. We will follow up on that line.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Certain chief ministers are now not coming as often as before to Delhi. Has there been a change of style?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Of course.

It has been variously interpreted.

Well, there is a lot of argument about how much we can interfere in the affairs of the state. The fact is that I will not say interfere, because interference is bad. But when we see something going wrong we have got to point it out.

I will give you an example. In Andhra Pradesh [AP], they decided to redo the ration cards. Now our assessment is that it will stir up a hornets' nest. Because so much wrong-doing will go on in the middle that you will be back to square one. And you will have created a lot of animosities. We had long discussions about it. They had a view, we had a view. We did not enforce any view. We talked about it. We convinced the AP CM [Chief Minister] and, when he was convinced, he corrected it.

There are other things. Like the Panchayati Raj bill. One of the thrusts of that was uniformity. Now obviously we would like that uniformity in all the Congress states. We would like to get our Congress CMs together. And say, look, this is what was in our bill. Can you try to bring your act in line with this in whatever way you can?

A lot of problems are caused by the media. Because the media keeps reporting that such and such CM was in Delhi and he was not able to talk to the Congress president. But mostly if they arrive without warning, then I can see them only at night, when I have finished the work of the day. And by that time the media has gone to press the next day the CM gives a denial in his own state. But the Delhi media does not get it. All that is going on in the media about CMs conclaves is bunk.

Country Divided

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Have you been doing any rethinking during these months on Centre-state relations?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I have. There are a number of aspects to Centre-state relations, and what we have got today is a very dangerous sort of equation. We have come to politics on very high promises which cannot be met. Everybody is making promises. We try not to do it. But

others do and as you go down to lower levels the promises become bigger and bigger.

Today you have divided the country into two hierarchies—Delhi at the top and the state capitals, with no responsibility, below that. When there is a delivery problem it is purely the responsibility of the state government.

But state governments immediately tend to blame the Central government. That opens up a confrontation from the grassroots level directly with the Centre. You have seen this in Assam and perhaps in Punjab also.

People start thinking that they have been shortchanged by the Centre. This is not true because the formulae are very fair and the Centre does not cheat on this. This I think is the most dangerous aspect of Centre-state relations today.

I must add that, perhaps because of this and other factors, almost every state has some little cell or district or unit which is dissatisfied with how they have been treated by the state.

Let us say, Saurashtra, Kutch, Jharkhand, UP [Uttar Pradesh] hills, Darjeeling, Coochbehar, Karbi Anglong, Bodos. Now, what happens? If they start getting dissatisfied with the state they seek succour from the Centre. They can appeal to the Centre.

If the state gives them a feeling that it is really the Centre which is responsible for all this, then they can only look outside.

At the minimum, this means asking for autonomy within a state like Vidharba is doing at the moment. At the next level it could be asking for another state. At the third level it could be asking for even more. That is on the political side.

On the economic side, the delivery machine and the machine that decides what needs to be done is too far away from the people. Again, the state capital and Delhi, you have got no contact with what they really need in the villa. So, you make a plan, you make a policy, you make a programme and you find that it looks very good in terms of numbers and gives them weight in Parliament.

We are able to say: "We have done this." But has it changed the life of the people?

Our panchayati raj bill was really looking at this aspect. We were scrupulous in seeing that no right of the state was bypassed. The only thing we were insisting on was devolution. For example, in financial and fiscal allocations.

The states would have a finance commission, we wouldn't put it up. It would decide how the resources would be divided, just like the Central finance commission decides for states and the Centre. But my idea of Panchayati Raj really had three or four thrusts.

From my point of view the most important was to remove frustration at the grassroots.

The first thrust was to remove political frustration arising out of lack of involvement in matters concerning people's own life. Second, to remove economic frustration resulting from growth not being related to aspirations. Third, to make the system more efficient because monitoring can only take place at that level. But having done all that on panchayati raj I am still reflecting on it. I think what we really need is even more devolution. I won't define it now it will be too controversial.

We need to re-evaluate centre-state relations in terms of this devolution. We want to look at the reverse also.

On the one hand we want to devolve, on the other hand we want a certain uniformity of policy. Otherwise you will lose all the economic advantages of being a large country with a large population.

The EEC, for example, has very strict rules on what sort of taxes can be put and cannot be put. It does not reduce the autonomy of any country. Now many of the things that our states have done are very retrograde in those terms and we need to look at that.

Common Market

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Which areas?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Let us say taxes which differentiate between one state and another and blocks production from one state. We must be a common market. Because that is our biggest strength and we must not destroy that. It is important that within the devolution the national perspective is kept in view and certain issues are decided in national interest rather than in state interest.

The other thing that happens with a three-tier system is that in case there is a direct conflict with the Centre you have a buffer in between. I am not trying to protect the Centre. But what I am trying to do is prevent people from wanting to separate from the state or country.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*The impression is that your party has virtually abandoned the farmer constituency to Devi Lal, Sharad Joshi and Tikait. Is this perception a correct one?*

[Mr. Gandhi] No. Not at all.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Why is it wrong?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I do not think I will go into the detail of that. But I will talk about the farmer constituencies. We are back to how you look at development. You can give more and more subsidies and say: "I am the greatest champion of farmers." But the real question is: Are you helping the farmers or are you actually putting them at a bigger disadvantage? I think the system of handouts that we have developed has, in fact, damaged the psyche of our people.

The farm sector does not need larger and larger subsidies. It needs help to really become one of the best agricultural sectors in the world. We are sure to it—Punjab, western UP, Haryana, coastal Andhra, parts of other southern states are as good as anywhere else in the world. Not because they get subsidies, but because they get extension, they get knowhow, they were helped in many ways but primarily in infrastructure.

So you have to look at the agricultural sector in a new light. The most important is infrastructure; Roads, Water, Energy and, I will add, telecom.

Telecom gives you reach to the market. We have seen fishermen in the south who, with just a telephone, are exporting to Singapore. A few years ago they could not sell their fish even in the local market.

The real problem is that there are too many people involved in agriculture, too many people chasing too little work. We have to create more jobs in the rural areas. I want to create jobs but not in fields. We must look at the industry-agriculture linkage in a new way.

Traditionally, that means tractors, implements, tools, pumps, the industrial input in agriculture. That of course will grow.

But we must open the other link. Which is the downstream link processing agriculture produce. Giving jobs in the rural area. This will also reduce wastage in agriculture.

Now I was told by somebody—the numbers I have not checked yet—that almost one-third of our agricultural produce is actually wasted because it rots. Now in a developed country I think it is a fraction of 1 percent that is actually lost. So even if we claim that our agricultural produce was so much, in terms of the consumer it was one-third less.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*I would like to go back to what you said about infrastructure. Being far more important than any other inputs. Why does the public sector continue to monopolise certain areas of infrastructure? What would be the harm if private investment were allowed in areas like telecom, railways, roads and broadcasting?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Broadcasting. Can I spend a minute on that? I have changed my mind on broadcasting. On the electronic media really. I think broadcasting should be opened to the private sector. There is one major reason for the change of mind.

We are going to have direct broadcast satellites overhead very soon. And then the whole rationale behind government holding on to electronic media goes out of the window. With the advent of direct broadcast satellite you have to challenge the values being put out to your people with whatever you are transmitting and you are left today with Doordarshan.

I do not think Doordarshan is ready to cope with such a challenge under the constraints in which it runs. The option that you have today is of not facing that challenge or allowing a private Indian media than Indian ethos and Indian values to face that challenge although that may be different from the government's view. And I think that is a better option than nobody being in the field.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Why should the public sector continue to monopolise infrastructure in other areas?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Mainly because the private sector won't really be interested in it.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*But there are several areas where the private sector has shown interest.*

[Mr. Gandhi] I think roads should be given to the private sector wherever they come up. I pushed very hard for the Ahmedabad-Bombay highway. I talked to Sharad Pawar on a number of occasions, not only now but also when I was Prime Minister, saying that he must give it a thought. I told him that I would back him in the face of whatever political flak he may pick up. But I don't think there is really enough private sector interest in roads. They may wish to enter the power sector.

Big Competition

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Telecom?*

[Mr. Gandhi] We had a slightly different problem with Telecom. I will come to that. But the basic problem we had with infrastructure is that it does not pay back—our people are too poor. So I think the government will have to be in the infrastructure and will have to spend much more on infrastructure.

You talked of Telecom. You see, we took a decision that telecom would be one of the areas where India would compete with global giants. And that is why we invested in C-DoT [Center for Development of Telematics].

In spite of all the noise that is being made, I think C-DoT did a good job.

It is alright for the government to talk about a few months slippage here and there. But you are really dealing with state-of-the-art technology. And in every country there is slippage.

Look at the U.S. space programme, they have been slipping for the past ten years. If you are going to dump a programme every time it slips you will never be able to get to the front. We had decided that C-DoT would be India's intervention in the telecom market which is one of the biggest in the world. And we have come out with a product which is one of the biggest in the world. And we had come out with a product which would be suitable for developing countries. We should easily outdo even the big companies there. And that is why it was necessary to keep a certain control on telecom but we did open a large number of areas in telecom to the private sector.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Today would you advocate going faster as far as liberation of the economy is concerned?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Certainly I would. Specifically in controls. We have to reform the bureaucracy, because that is where you always get stuck. Whenever the Congress come back, we should say: "You are a bureaucracy to get the people of India to develop as fast as they can. That means you must be the catalysts for development and not the developer." We must get out of controls, into fiscal incentives and fiscal controls. Internally, keeping in mind the imperatives of protecting certain sectors, which MRTP [Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices] does, we have to really open up almost completely.

Today capital is available, knowhow is available, technology is available. The only real constraint is foreign exchange. You set foreign exchange limits and then open up keeping in mind again that sometimes within a sector you need a transformation phase.

The textile sector, for example. I think the whole sector has been given a wrong direction. We have decided that the textile sector is primarily meant to give employment. This held good at one point of time. But the textile sector should be about providing cloth. We must see how employment can be increased, perhaps in the textile sector, perhaps in the services, perhaps in other areas.

Now here you have a very real problem. You have a lot of handlooms, which, because of the tax structure, produce the cheap cloth. You have the artificial material—synthetics—which are expensive cloth, which is the wrong way round. The average person needs synthetics because they are cheaper, they wear better, they wash better, they last longer.

Handlooms should be a top market product: Sophisticated, expensive going to the select few. Now we have got to turn this around. And I think given a proper direction, a proper time-frame, it can be done. The weavers can be protected, they can be put into a place where they can be earning much more than they are earning with subsidies, without subsidies.

Punjab Elections

[THE TIMES OF INDIA] *Should elections in Punjab be held or not?*

[Mr. Gandhi] Well, you see we held elections in Punjab. Much has been said by people: It was unfair, it was fair, it was this, it was that. Well, I think, by and large, the elections were peaceful. We had elections and people were elected. We were ready to have the assembly elections afterwards. Not absolutely with the other assembly elections, but separated by a few days so that forces could be available for Punjab. We had laid out a schedule for elections. We divided Punjab into three zones—a completely terrorist-free zone, affected zone and very badly affected zone. And we were going to go 1, 2, 3 in quick succession so that you could have all your forces available for each area and hold the elections in three days and I think spread out over ten days.

But this government's allowed the law and order situation to completely go out of hand. I have to contradict myself because I feel without elections you are now very clearly moving away from a solution in Punjab. Because there is only so much governor's rule that a state can take. And I think Punjab has had enough. But having said that, I don't think conditions are alright for elections in Punjab.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Are you preparing for the general elections?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I will give, happily, a politician's answer to that. I think we are going to have a crunch around October-November with the Ram Janmabhoomi issue coming up. And the Prime Minister will be put in a tight position around that time. He will have an option to act before that or act because of that. Every indication that is coming out of the government today is that he is planning to pre-empt that and act before that. But, having said that, I do not think any MP [Member of Parliament] in the Janata Dal wants elections. And the more they feel that the elections are going to come, the ferment in the Janata Dal is going to increase.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*There is continued talk about a realignment within the existing Parliamen.t*

[Mr. Gandhi] We do not want to come into government.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*So you prefer elections?*

[Mr. Gandhi] We will go for elections. I think we will do well in elections. But I don't think this is the time, what with Kashmir, Punjab, border tensions, Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, I think we should allow these things to cool down a little bit. The Gulf also adds to that. Because everybody's attention will be on the Gulf, which means that tensions on our border are more likely to flare up with everybody else looking away.

So we would prefer elections to come later. The real question is: Is the country prepared?

Bofors Issue

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*Is the government trying to get Bofors back on the front burner?*

[Mr. Gandhi] I hope they do. Because I think it is going to burn them if they do.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA]*I say this because of these various documents being published in the past few days.*

[Mr. Gandhi] No. These documents have been with them for some time. I believe these documents have been used internally to keep their house in order.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA] *Would you like to add something more? There is speculation about why Mr Arun Nehru's and your name was sought to be kept out of this discussion?*

[Mr. Gandhi] If you notice, these documents indicate what we have not said, but what I have known for a long time. The first man we sent to talk to the Swedes to tell them that this deal should be totally above board and there should be no payments, no middlemen, etc. was Mr V.P. Singh.

[THE TIMES OF INDIA] *What is the inference you wish to draw?*

[Mr. Gandhi] That he has been in on this deal right from the beginning. He has been involved in the deal right from the time he went to Stockholm. He got a full brief. He got a political brief from me personally. He got a little file we made out from the defence ministry.

Political Maturity Assessed

91AS0076 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 15 Sep 90 p 22

[Article by Sharat Pradhan]

[Text] The categorical assertions of the former prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on several national issues during his two-day visit to Amethi parliamentary constituency recently have marked his emergence as a politically mature and confident leader.

The Congress president, who had so far remained noncommittal and vague on many vital issues since the formation of the National Front government in November last, did not hesitate to put across his own and, thereby the Congress' clear-cut views on several problems faced by the country.

His sharp differences at many public and party workers' meetings at different places in Amethi are being considered as the beginning of his campaign against the failures and follies of the V.P. Singh government. These draw greater significance in view of his repeated assertions that a mid-term poll could not be ruled out.

Mr Gandhi endeared himself to the masses wherever he went throughout the sprawling constituency, not merely because of the absence of the erstwhile Black Cat ring around him but also because he successfully projected himself as one who meant business.

He also succeeded in making a severe dent in the Amethi unit of the Janata Dal, where the lone block pramukh of the ruling party, Mr Ram Harak Singh, crossed over to the Congress. There are 17 block pramukhs in the constituency and 16 were already with the Congress. Mr Singh announced his quitting the Janata Dal to join the Congress together with his bandwagon of 46 gram pradhans and four sarpanches at a function organised by the Amethi bar association. Only three pradhans in the entire constituency continue to owe allegiance to the Janata Dal now.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr Gandhi's legal adviser, Mr S.C. Maheshwari, who is an eminent senior advocate of the supreme court, lawyers in all segments of the constituency have also been organised to carry the Rajiv Gandhi banner.

Mr Gandhi succeeded in driving home his point that the present Prime Minister, Mr V.P. Singh, had sown the seeds of division of the nation on caste lines. Interestingly, the message was received well even in some backward dominated areas where the people seemed to agree that only the poor among the backward classes must be entitled to the benefits of reservation.

While most Congress leaders seemed to, so far, waver in their attitude towards the government's announcement to implement the Mandal commission's recommendations, Mr Gandhi took the lead in formally coming out with the party's clear-cut stand on the issue. He reiterated that the implementation of the Mandal report in toto would result in confining the benefits of reservation to the families of the privileged ministers, IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officers, doctors and engineers.

By highlighting the fact that the constitution had provided for reservation to backward classes and not castes, Mr Gandhi was able to impress upon the people that the much talked-about egalitarian society could be created only if caste barriers were removed.

The Congress president explained both the merits and demerits of the Mandal report, whereby he also sounded convincing that the Congress regime had gone deep into the report whereas the Janata Dal government had worked in haste, mainly for "petty political considerations."

Apart from lashing out at the Janata Dal leaders over the current nation-wide turmoil on the Mandal issue, Mr Gandhi did not hesitate to admit his follies as prime minister. Referring to the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid issue, he pointed out that mistakes could be committed by anyone, but stressed that it was important to ensure that they were not repeated.

When his attention was drawn to a recent statement by the former Union home minister, Mr Buta Singh, asking for the handing over the disputed shrine in Ayodhya to the Hindus, Mr Gandhi said, "well, that must be his personal opinion." He asserted that he was willing to extend full support to the Mulayam Singh Yadav government in its stand on the Ayodhya issue as he felt that the matter should be resolved only through the judicial process.

The former prime minister, who often in the past appeared uncomfortable with questions relating to the Bofors scandal, seemed confident now that the new regime had not only failed to establish a case against

him, but that it would not be able to do so in future either. Laughing off a question raised by a newsman, he remarked that now the National Front government was in such doldrums that one could not be sure "whether the Bofors investigations will be made public or whether the government will fall before that."

Mr Gandhi highlighted the large-scale irregularities by the present government in the refund of excise duty. While the irregularities were first brought to light about two months ago, no one has raised the issue at the national level so far. He made it a point to emphasise that the excise duty scandal was a far bigger case of financial bungling than Bofors. "While the Bofors case allegedly involved a sum of Rs 64 [rupees] crores, the excise refund scandal is of the order of Rs 1,000 crores," Mr Gandhi said. When the Union finance minister had himself admitted refusing as much as Rs 350 crores to industrialists in this manner, it was obvious who the present government was trying to benefit, he added. Interestingly, he also demanded a high-level probe by a parliamentary committee into the case as had been done in the Bofors scandal.

The Congress president made no bones about admitting that the party had suffered a serious debacle in the last general elections because of certain inherent weakness, which, he said, he was trying to remove. He therefore called for strengthening the party organisations right from the roots.

With Mr Gandhi having sounded the bugle in Amethi, it remains to be seen whether his party colleagues and state leaders also follow suit and rise to the occasion to keep up the tempo of his offensive against the V.P. Singh government.

Trade Turnover With Pakistan Rises by 100 Percent

91AS0078A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 7 Sep 90 p 17

[Text] Despite various factors inhibiting the flow of bilateral trade between India and Pakistan, the business communities on both sides of the border have showed keen interest in entering into meaningful trade and economic ties with each other.

According to a document published by the Indo-Pak desk at the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) on "Indo-Pak trade and economic relations, problems and prospects," it has stated that in 1988-89, there was a marked turn-around in the trade turnover which increased to Rs 109 [rupees] crores registering more than a 100 percent increase compared to the previous year.

The analysis of the trade figures during 1980-81 to 1987-88 reveal that the bilateral trade turnover had been comparatively small in size, the highest figure being Rs 76 crore in 1980-81, the lowest Rs 29 crore in 1984-85 and the annual average for the eight year period being no more than Rs 47 crore.

India's exports increased from Rs 20 crore in 1987-88 to Rs 36 crore in 1988-89. This increase during April 1988 to March 1989 could perhaps be partially attributed to the enlargement of the list of private sector export items from 42 to 249 in April 1988.

With the further enlargement of this list to 571 items in July 1989, the value of Indian exports to Pakistan may go up further, the document added.

There is potential and efforts must be made by both the governments and business communities to formulate policies which will accelerate trade between the two countries.

The document advocated the exposition of single country exhibitions with advantage could be organised in India and Pakistan. Permission for "on the spot sales" would further enhance the utility of such exhibitions.

The decision to constitute the Indo-Pak joint business council should be expeditiously implemented, it said.

Both trade and joint venture transactions can also be facilitated through barter and counter trade in selected commodities which have more stable and complementary bilateral demand and supply structures, it added.

Correspondent Sees 'Tacit Support' For Naga Underground

91AS0075A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English 13 Sep 90 p 4

[Text] Despite the setbacks and internal feuds, the Naga underground organization—the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Swu and Muivah faction)—is not likely to die out in the near future, according to intelligence sources.

The recent busting of its general headquarters in the Yangkhunou-Yangkhullen area, in north Manipur, bordering Nagaland was a major setback for the once powerful guerrilla set-up in the north-eastern region.

But, the existence of the NSCN [National Socialist Council of Nagaland] general headquarters in Indian territory, just about 35 km from a security post in the Mao area in Manipur's Senapati district for more than two years, indicates that the underground organization still enjoys tacit support from a section of the people.

The sources said that the guerrillas cannot remain and operate in the region without the support and help from the people and admitted that the NSCN headquarters could not be located earlier by the security personnel.

According to the sources, the headquarter was set up for the first time in Indian territory after the NSCN split following an internal clash at its previous headquarter in upper Myanmar area which was later destroyed by the

Myanmar forces in March 1988. The NSCN chairman, Mr Isaac Chishi Swu and the general secretary, Mr Thuingaleng Muivah, separated from the MSCN vice-chairman, Mr S.S. Khaplang, who is a Pangmi Myanmar Naga and controls the Naga inhabited areas in upper Myanmar. Mr Khaplang's follower gunned down more than 80 NSCN Tangkhul members (supporters of Mr Muivah and Mr Swu) during the internal clash following Mr Khaplang's allegations that the chairman and general secretary were "secretly" negotiating with the Indian Government. Mr Swu and Mr Muivah denied the allegations and called Mr Khaplang a "traitor."

As a result of the internal disagreement, Mr Muivah and Mr Swu along with a large number of followers had entered Indian territory and started operating in the Manipur and Nagaland region from their unknown hide-outs.

What is perturbing the law-enforcing agencies in the State is the "close link" between the NSCN and UNLF [?United Nagaland Liberation Front], which is considered to be more well-organized than any other of the Meitei extremist outfits.

Commentary Views Proposed Electronic Media Autonomy

90AS0459A Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 22 Aug 90 p 4

[Text] Our honorable central ministers still wish to make "Akashbani" and "Doordarshan" autonomous. That goes to show, at best, that they are noble people who are not in the habit of breaking their word. But the public whom the noble announcement is intended to please has figured out what it is all about. It can no longer be concealed that the government does not mean what it says and that it has no intention of implementing its word. True, Front government leaders had pledged on the campaign trail that if they came to power they would show Congress that the two well-known government-run forums ought to be livened up and show them how autonomy could do the trick. Of course, that was just a campaign promise, made before they came to power. Now the whole picture has changed. It is easy to offer what you do not have. It is a different thing when you actually have it. The problem with our generous information and broadcasting minister, P. Upendra, is that he now has it in hand; he is now having difficulty remembering that promise.

It was mentioned earlier, the government is busy trumpeting its media projects and it has no shortage of words to show its generosity. It still claims that it is an open government, that it never tries to use "Akashbani" or "Doordarshan" to promote its party interest, that it has the courage and desire to face criticism. For a while during the previous administration "Doordarshan" ran a program on which central ministers would come to the studio and answer viewers' questions. Later it was discontinued. The present government has used the same format to launch a program called "Open Forum." The name proclaims what a noble and bold effort it is to start a program like that. That's fine. But what in fact is happening? So far two shows have been aired. The first featured Union Finance Minister Madhu Dandaavate, while the second show had the Front's leading light, George Fernandes. The two ministers' honesty and sincerity is beyond question. But both shows have triggered a debate in Parliament. The complaint: The finance minister was asked favorable questions—or to put it mildly—specially selected questioners were brought in before the camera. In the second case, the charge is serious. It is claimed that the interview was censored before it was aired. Of course, the government has strongly denied it was censored. The government version is that the interview was merely "edited." The government probably expects that the explanation is enough, that it will shut up the critics.

So much for the open government and its "sincere" effort to liberate "Doordarshan." Meanwhile, the West Bengal government has again demanded that the central government, in broadcasting news and functions relating to the state, consult an advisory committee that would include state representatives. When the central information and broadcasting minister visited Calcutta, the chief minister made the proposal to him. Not only that, the information and broadcasting minister was given a list of people who would be members of that committee. There is no ambiguity about what the state government wants from the "friendly" central government. The advisory committee has been proposed so "Akashbani" and "Doordarshan" broadcast news chosen by the Left Front government in the language it desires. Cynics might call this an effort to introduce censorship. Recently, the chief minister and information minister repeatedly expressed unhappiness about "Doordarshan" and "Akashbani" run by their "friendly government." That warning has worked. Otherwise, the information and broadcasting minister would not have rushed to Calcutta. But why can't the state government ask that the two forums be given autonomy as soon as possible so news broadcasts may reflect realism and objectivity. Why can't we demand more channels to broadcast additional programs on positive news and facts concerning the state? Why should we hear the same thing from all quarters? Should all governments preach magnanimity but serve only their party interests?

IRAN

Fall of Montazeri Discussed

91AS0012A Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 8, 9 Aug 90

[Continuation of articles derived from Reyshahri's Political Memoir by Baqer 'Alavi; first article entitled "The Mehdi Hashemi Incident, Touchstone (4), Part One: Evaluation of Mr. Montazeri as a Source of Emulation and Issuer of Religious Decrees"; second article entitled "The Mehdi Hashemi Incident, Touchstone (5), Part

Two: Evaluation of Mr. Montazeri as a Source of Emulation and Issuer of Religious Decrees"]

[8 Aug p 11]

[Text] In the name of God the compassionate and the merciful

If in addition to having knowledge or most high learning, maturity, wisdom, an exemplary life and legitimacy of birth and being a Twelver Shiite, we also consider "not having greed for the world" and "justice" as requirements for being a source of emulation, one must admit that the way in which Mr. Montazeri dealt with the issue of Mehdi Hashemi would make questionable his competence as a source of emulation.

Before examining this issue, it is necessary to clarify two points: first, that the issue of being a source of emulation and able to issue religious decrees is not a political one, one that is dependent on the particular interpretation of one faction or another. Rather, it is related to respect for and honor given to an issue, the truth or falsehood of one kind of worship or transaction, and the cleanliness or impurity of an object. Therefore, it is necessary to look at it from this perspective.

Secondly, a source of emulation and being able to issue religious decrees is not a position to which one can be appointed or from which one can be dismissed. Rather, it has always been and is such that Muslims, based on accepted standards, try to gain access to a fully-qualified religious scholar, and once they are certain about a particular person, they choose him as their source of emulation.

Considering the above-mentioned points, let us once again briefly review how Mr. Montazeri has dealt with the issue of Mehdi Hashemi, particularly from the perspective of disobeying the instructions of the religious guardian, and leave the conclusion to our readers.

1. The blessed opinion of Imam Khomeyni (may God sanctify his soul) concerning the Mehdi Hashemi incident and how it was handled was not and is not unclear to anyone, the reason being the nature of the crimes and offenses committed by those connected with this event. Even if it had been unclear to some people in the beginning, certainly after the broadcast of Mehdi Hashemi's confession and the discovery of the corpses of those killed and the evidence of the crime, it should not have remained unclear to anyone. But Mr. Montazeri, as was discussed in earlier essays, from the beginning to the end of the event maintained his position of supporting this movement and frequently opposing the vali-ye faqih [religious guardian].

2. One of the definitely prohibited acts in Islam is the killing of honorable people outside the framework of religious precepts. The perpetrators of such a crime, according to the clear text of the Koran, shall suffer the fires of hell. If Mr. Montazeri has any doubt about the involvement of Mehdi Hashemi in the civil war of Afghanistan, which left hundreds of people dead, the issue of Bahrain, which resulted in the captivity and martyrdom of a number of the combatants, the issue of the Kurds in Turkey and the involvement of the Guard Corps and the Qohdarijan komiteh, which resulted in dozens of people being killed and wounded, the order of Mehdi Hashemi to kill Jahan Soltan Aqa'i, Ramazan Mehdizadeh, Seikh Qanbar'ali, Safarzadeh, Amir 'Abbas Bahrainian, 'Aqeli, Rabbani-Amlashi and others—about which we, of course, have no doubt, and the accused has also frequently explained the details of his involvement in all those cases—he certainly cannot have any doubt about the murders of Shamsabadi, Homayun, and Sa'id Heshmat, which were carried out upon the instructions of Mehdi Hashemi and by his agents. And he has not been heard to express any misgivings in regard to these cases.

Let us suppose that the killing of all the individuals mentioned was necessary from the perspective of Islamic law, which neither Mr. Mehdi Hashemi nor his supporters believed to be so, and they have specifically stated in regard to the killing of the children of Heshmat that they were killed because they had been witnesses to their father's murder and it was necessary for them to be killed for security reasons, so that no evidence would be left behind of the killers. If we also ignore this issue and consider them all as deserving of being killed, even according to the decree of Mr. Montazeri, it could have been carried out after being tried in a proper court, upon the ruling of a fully-qualified judge and by the agents of the judicial organizations and not others.

Now, two questions arise. First: What steps did Mr. Montazeri take to defend the victims? Another question is: How did he deal with the killers?

3. Dozens of announcements and underground newspapers by the Mehdi Hashemi group were published in opposition to various factions and personalities. One concerned a representative in the second Majles, about which Mr. Montazeri said, "I was so angry about the publication of this announcement that I became upset about the killing of the Heshmatis." But despite the fact that it was proven to Mr. Montazeri that his son, Sa'id, who is connected with Mehdi Hashemi, had a hand in preparing some of those announcements, for which reason he had scolded him, he did not allow his son to be dealt with for his offenses as others were and prevented his arrest.

4. Although Hadi Hashemi, the brother of Mehdi and the son-in-law of Mr. Montazeri, according to the evidence, was a partner in the crimes committed by Mehdi and should have been arrested in accordance with religious laws and the instructions of Imam Khomeyni to be investigated for the accusations against him, Mr. Montazeri prevented it, eliciting the response from the Imam in this regard: "Why does he contact the officials and not allow them to deal with these persons as is done with others?"

5. After the arrest of Mehdi Hashemi, announcements were published by those surviving this incident in his support and explaining the reasons for Mr. Montazeri's strike against and opposition to the honorable officials of the Islamic Republic. In his message of 5/8/1368 [27 October 1989], Imam Khomeyni considered the publishers of these announcements as counterrevolutionary, deviant, and affiliated with Mehdi Hashemi and these publications of such announcements as a separate reason for deviation from the revolution and Islam. Not only did Mr. Montazeri not prevent their publication, but at least one of those announcements signed by "a group of scholars and students of Qom theological center" was previewed by Mr. Montazeri and distributed with his consent on 14/7/1365 [16 October 1986].

6. From the moment of the dismissal of Mr. Montazeri, particularly since the sad death of the founder of the Islamic Republic, his supporters have published numerous announcements questioning the essential decision of the Imam and distorting the reputation of the honorable officials of the regime in support of and to revitalize Mr. Montazeri. Not only is no opposition made to their publication, but they are considered by Mr. Montazeri to be in defense of the oppressed and have been approved by him.

What has been mentioned is some of the facts related to how Mr. Montazeri dealt with the Mehdi Hashemi event and not all that is used to evaluate the justice and piety of an individual, which would require volumes.

The remainder will appear in the articles to follow.

[9 Aug p 11]

[Text] In the name of God the compassionate and the merciful

In the previous article, we said that one of the consequences of the Mehdi Hashemi incident was questioning the competence of Mr. Montazeri as a source of emulation and an issuer of religious decrees. In this connection, we pointed out some of his reactions to the above-mentioned incident. Now, we shall pursue the matter from a different angle.

1. Since the death of the grand leader of the Islamic revolution, the revered Imam Khomeyni, so far much effort has been made by the survivors of the Mehdi Hashemi group and those connected with the house of Mr. Montazeri to raise the issue and prove that he is a source of emulation. Only part of it is the dozens of communiques and pamphlets. Without using our information in connection with those involved in preparing and distributing the above-mentioned pamphlets as a base for our judgment, we raise this question with our readers: What are the motives and objectives behind such actions? Can these actions not be considered as being for the same purpose and the continuation of the same chain of events which took place after the arrest of Mehdi Hashemi and the strike by Mr. Montazeri, which were termed by the Imam a separate proof of deviation from Islam and the revolution? Can we not say that raising the issue of Mr. Montazeri as a source of emulation is a cover by a number of deviants and counterrevolutionaries for their movement against the revolution, the regime, the honorable officials, and Imam Khomeyni, as was the cover of his being a deputy leader at one time?

2. In some of the above-mentioned pamphlets, through raising issues such as the scholarly and combative background of Mr. Montazeri and the praise and approval he receives from political-religious personalities and some of the jurisprudential reverences made to him by Imam Khomeyni, efforts are made to raise the issue and prove that he is a source of emulation. Of course, this is aside from the slogans, speeches, and statements made in public assemblies by the supporters of the above-mentioned issue.

Obviously, such issues, even though they were valid and existed in the past, cannot be evidence of the present situation of individuals, because the positions taken by and the actions of Mr. Montazeri since 1365 [21 March 1986-20 March 1987] are so disgusting, and pleasing to the enemy, that the compassionate leader of the people and founder of the revolution and the Islamic Republic regime, after two years of continuous unsuccessful effort to reform him, finally, on 6/1/1368 [26 March 1989], most adamantly dismissed him, and in the same vein, the majority of those who had endorsed Mr. Montazeri gave up on him and changed their positions. Hence, not only is the evidence of the past not considered proof of a person being a source of emulation, but it implies mischief and conspiracy as well.

3. A number of people interpreted Imam Khomeyni's message of 8/1/1368 [28 March 1989] to Mr. Montazeri as the rescinding of the 6/1/1368 [26 March 1989] message by his honor and, by resorting to the statement of the Imam saying, "I find it in your and the revolution's best interest that you be a religious jurist of whose opinions the regime and the people can benefit," pretend that the Imam had approved of his being a source of emulation.

To examine this issue, a few points must be made:

Firstly, this statement from the message of Imam Khomeyni is made in view of a sentence in Mr. Montazeri's letter of 7/1/1368 [27 March 1989], in which he states: "I consider myself obliged to obey and carry out your honor's instructions." In the middle of the letter, addressing the imam of the people, he had written; "I beg of Your Excellency...to permit me to continue to teach as in the past as a small and humble seminary student in the theological center and with scholarly activities serve Islam and the revolution under the wise auspices of his excellency, and if errors or weaknesses that are a part of human nature have occurred, God willing, they will be eliminated under your excellency's leadership."

Secondly, the message of Imam Khomeyni, God rest his soul, addressed to the representatives of the Majles and

the ministers, which was issued 18 days after the message on 8/1/1368 [28 March 1989], contains the same content as his honor's message of 2/1/1368 [22 March 1989] and shows that no change was made in the position of Imam Khomeyni in regard to Mr. Montazeri. In that message, the Imam stated: "I have heard that you are not aware of the issue of Mr. Montazeri and do not know what the story is all about. You should just know that your aged father has for more than two years tried his best in announcements and messages to keep the issue from ending here. But, unfortunately, he did not succeed. On the other hand, religious duty required the necessary decision to be made to preserve the regime and Islam. Hence, with an aching heart, I dismissed my life's friend in the interest of the regime and Islam. God willing, the brothers and sisters will be clear on the matter in the future, to some extent. It is not necessary to emphasize that defending Islam and the regime is no light matter, and if deviation is made by anyone in any position, he shall be exposed to the people immediately." 26/1/1368 [15 April 1989]

Does the tone of this sentence of this message indicate a retreat by Imam Khomeyni with regard to Mr. Montazeri? See whether the content of these sentences differs from that of the 2/1/1368 [22 March 1989] message of the Imam, in which he states:

"I have frequently announced that I have not sworn brotherhood with anyone at any rank. The framework of my friendship is in the correct path of any individual.... If the foreign agents and those who are informed and deceived and who have become a spokesman of others without any heed do not stop such actions, the people shall reject them mercilessly."

Besides, essentially with such an interpretation, would it be appropriate to the personality of the Imam with regard to an important issue such as Mr. Montazeri that he reach a point of view on 6/1/1368 [26 March 1989] and two days later change his opinion? It is clear that the issue of not distributing the message of 6/1/1368 [26 March 1989] is unrelated to the change in opinion.

The conclusion of the sentence, "I find it in your and the revolution's best interests for you to be a religious jurist from whose views the people and the regime can benefit," clearly does no more than advise him to teach and engage in scholarly activities, provided they are directed towards solving the problems of the regime and the people.

Thirdly, and most importantly, prior to the above statements, these phrases can be witnessed in the Imam's message:

"In order to avoid repeating the past mistakes, I advise you to rid your home of inauspicious persons and seriously prevent the coming to and going from your home of opponents of the regime who merely pretend to be interested in Islam and the Islamic Republic."

In the above statements, two points are made to Mr. Montazeri: first, the necessity of ridding his home of inauspicious individuals and, second, seriously preventing the coming and going of opponents of the regime who merely pretend to be interested in Islam and the Islamic revolution.

In order to clarify the importance of these issues, the Imam added: "I reminded you of this matter during the Mehdi Hashemi incident."

Those who are informed know that not only has Mr. Montazeri not yet made any changes in his home, in those around him, and in his mind in practicing the two above-mentioned conditions, but in a letter on 18/2/1368 [8 May 1989] to Imam Khomeyni, he wrote explicitly: "The people in my home are not guilty of anything. The creation of a climate against them is sinful." And on 11/1/1368 [31 March 1989], he stated in his speech: "Whatever has been said or written about me is nothing less than lies and slander."

Unfortunately, an examination of the positions taken by and the actions of Mr. Montazeri and those around him in the past 16 months show that no change has been made, and in the same way that the reminders of Imam Khomeyni out of good will did not change the position and actions of Mr. Montazeri in the issue of Mehdi Hashemi, the advice of his excellency since the dismissal has also been ignored.

4. In order to justify Mr. Montazeri's being a source of emulation, some have used a comparative approach and speak of other people's weaknesses. In regard to these people, let us point out that, firstly, the issue of the source of emulation and authority to issue religious decrees cannot be contained within the framework of political balances. One cannot simply prefer one to the other without taking into consideration the religious laws and proper standards for election, thereby entrusting the affairs of the people's religion to him. The issue is not about what is good or better, but about who meets the requirements and who does not.

Secondly, supposing that at present there exists no source of emulation who meets the scholarly, pious, political, and social requirements and lacks the great popular base and acceptance among those in the theological centers, this would be a problem that the regime and the theological centers would try to eliminate through proper planning and vast investments in the near future, but it cannot be a pretext to deviate from religious standards and precepts in choosing a source of emulation.

In conclusion, two points need to be mentioned.

First, in the present discussion, we have only examined Mr. Montazeri's competence as a source of emulation from the viewpoint of his dealing with the issue of Mehdi Hashemi and in connection with his dealing with the issue of justice and piety and have also responded to some doubts and ambiguities. Otherwise, one could look

at the issue from other angles as well, one being his psychological makeup, which has been raised in Imam Khomeyni's letter of 12/7/1365 [4 October 1986]: "What is certain and most unfortunate is your doubt about the actions, statements and writings. As soon as they are delivered, you make a decision, speak in the public assembly, and make recommendations to the judicial branch and others."

Second is the issue of Mr. Montazeri as a source of emulation and the discussions in this regard among particular strata of the society. In order to have the last word and to clarify the pious and healthy minds among them, we raised this discussion. Otherwise, the masses of the Hezbollah people, for whom the love of the Imam is the warmth and source of their lives, will never support a person whose imam has dismissed him "with an aching heart in the interest of the regime and Islam."

PAKISTAN

Interim Government's Sense of Fairness Questioned

90AS0451A Karachi JANG in Urdu 5 Sep 90 pp 3, 10

[Column "Narm Garam" ('Hot and Cold') by Zahida Hina entitled: "Bless My Nest"]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Tomorrow on 6 September, the newly elected assemblies will be one month old. In other words, the caretaker government will have completed 30 days of its life. Thirty days is not considered much for a democratic government that is expected to stay for five years. However, 30 days for a caretaker or an interim government is one third of its total tenure. The people have this undeniable right to very closely examine the work of a government that was appointed to replace a "corrupt," "incompetent," "merciless," and "biased" government just as much as they have the right to check the government composed of their elected representatives.

Questions about the fairness of these people who were appointed to the caretaker government were asked the very day this government was appointed. Many people have also given this advice, which was lost like a "cry in the wilderness," that a dozen apolitical, unbiased, and fair people be selected from among the 100 million people of this country to the job of a caretaker government if this government was really going to be temporary and its goal was just to plan for fair elections on 24 October. People who are interested in running for offices themselves should not have been put to test and they should not have been provided the opportunity to campaign for various positions while sitting in the chair of an "arbiterator." The people who have advised this believed that this would have avoided the possibility of unnecessary political confrontation during the proposed elections and the public opinion at home and abroad as well as political rivals would not be able to declare these elections unfair.

Perhaps, our country does not have enough able men! That is why we could not find a few dozen unbiased, fair, and just persons or there was a special "national interest" which forced the government not to listen to this advice coming from several sections of the country!

Anyhow, the result is before us and the reason is not important now. We do not only have a caretaker government but also the record of their "performance" during the last 30 days. It is not difficult to see how much the promises of fairness and justice are being kept.

All officials of the caretaker government promise daily that they will remain neutral during the elections and will not use government resources in their election campaign. They claim to hold elections as scheduled and continue their task of investigating the former government without recognizing any political pressure. They also have promised not to use the government communication media for character assassination of political opponents or to publicize themselves as was done during the previous government.

We cannot say anything about the possibility of holding elections as scheduled. All we can do is pray. However, there are many questions about the claim about being neutral in the election process and not abusing the government communication media. The number of people asking these question has increased so much during the last 30 days that even the critics of the former government have started to say that the caretaker government is not neutral.

Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani, president of Jamiat-i Ulema-i Pakistan, told the Voice of America in an interview, "The investigation is changing into acts of revenge. The caretaker governments established in the states and at the center are not neutral. Superintendents of police and deputy commissioners are not giving permission to the parties to hold campaign meetings. Persons who would like to run for elections are advised by deputy and assistant commissioners not to file their candidacy. Those who want to run the election against IJI [Islami Jamhoori Ittihad] are advised to run either on an IJI ticket or not to run at all."

Jamaat-i Islami's chairman, Qazi Haseen Ahmed, is also not satisfied with the performance of the caretaker government. He told the newsmen at the Rawalpindi Press Club, "IJI and Jamaat-i Islami were not consulted about the appointment of people to the caretaker government." It could be the disappointing performance and bad publicity of the caretaker government that forced Qazi Ahmed to say, "We are not responsible for the caretaker government."

Thus, while the one important issue is that the election must be held by 24 October, the other equally important issue is the neutrality and fairness of these elections. The people would have more faith if it was decided that the persons appointed to the caretaker government would not be allowed to participate in the 24 October elections. The fact is that most of the persons involved in the

caretaker government have announced their intentions to run for elections themselves. IJI's president, Professor Ghafoor, also has reservations about the fairness of these elections. He told a weekly newspaper that, "the political parties should focus on the timeliness of the elections and that the caretaker government does not manage to influence the results of the elections." He said later in the same interview, "political parties should demand safeguards to ensure that the present caretaker governments do not give special treatment to themselves and their candidates."

The way the fair investigations have been discussed during the last month and the way the caretaker government has "performed excellently" in this area is forcing the people to think that it will not be possible to call all this fair and just and it would only change the meaning of the word "fair." Maulana Noorani just said that "the investigations are changing into acts of revenge." Senator Professor Khursheed Ahmed went even further. He said in a speech given in the Senate, "The president has appointed to the cabinet some people who should be investigated first. The people are justified in wondering how to expect fair elections from people who are accused of corruption."

Whatever Senator Professor Khursheed Ahmed, Maulana Noorani, Qazi Haseen Ahmed, and Professor Ghafoor and other leaders have said are not just their personal and political opinion; they represent the feelings of the people prevalent on the appointment and after one month of watching the performance of the caretaker government.

PPP-TI Election Alliance Said Unnatural

90AS0451B Karachi JANG in Urdu 5 Sep 90 p 3

[Column "Adab Arz" ('Regards') by Nasrullah Khan: "Election Alliance"]

[Text] We have great respect for former Air Marshal Asghar Khan. He is a clean man and has a flawless character. Even his political career has been without a blemish. He is not only the force behind a movement, but the movement itself. As for steadfastness, there is no one equal to him. Someone asked Minto [an author] why he had not written anything about Ahmed Nadim Qasimi while he wrote a lot about everyone. Minto replied, "All I can write about him is that he is a gentleman, he is a gentleman, and he is a gentleman. I cannot write anything else about him." We can say about Asghar Khan that he is unbelievably a gentleman. Gentleness does not work in politics. A person does not have to be a criminal, but he must understand the mentality of criminals. When former Air Marshal Asghar Khan first ventured into the thorny world of politics, the people, knowing his clean record, had said that he was like a breath of fresh air and knew that a patriotic and humane leader was coming into this arena. They welcomed him with open arms. When the Ayub government imprisoned the late Mr. Bhutto, Asghar Khan carried out a nationwide campaign and forced Ayub Khan to let Mr. Bhutto go. As Allah wished, Mr. Bhutto rose very fast and left Asghar Khan behind. Later, Mr. Bhutto encouraged Asghar Khan in appreciation that we still remember.

When Air Marshal Asghar Khan started the TI [Tehrik-i-Istiqlal], it was full of steadfastness as we have already mentioned. Mr. Bhutto had ridiculed Asghar Khan publicly and Asghar Khan had remained quiet being a gentleman. When the Bhutto government became unbearable and the people came out in the streets, our former leaders also left their parties and joined the people. Asghar Khan was one of them. He began to make very strong speeches against Mr. Bhutto, his party, and his government. In one of his speeches, he had said that Mr. Bhutto should be hanged from the Kohala Bridge. It is often said that Asghar Khan paved the way for the martial law regime. Now that he is cooperating with the PPP [Pakistan People's Party], we could say that if he could not cooperate with the father, he could always cooperate with the daughter. After all, it is a good deed to help an orphan! The question, however, is: How long will this alliance last? The alliance is against the habits and practices of the leaders of both parties. Both are not moderate or consistent. Both are mercurial. Both are used to playing solo in the political arena. Benazir Bhutto cannot bear to share power with the small parties that she cooperates with. She cooperated with the MRD [Movement for the Restoration of Democracy] parties only as long as she needed them. When it came to moving ahead, she moved ahead leaving them behind. Now, no MRD party trusts her.

However, Air Marshal Asghar Khan has quit the MRD and joined his forces with the PPP. The alliance is solely for the elections and should be since both of these parties have nothing in common. One benefit would be that the former air marshal's party will get two or four seats in the legislative assemblies. Interestingly enough, soon after forming an alliance with the PPP, Asghar Khan remarked that the president was right in breaking the assemblies. A PPP member commented to a PPP leader about this that "what you sing out and what your tambourine sings out." Asghar Khan also says that we should have a presidential rule in Pakistan to stop the practice of horse trading. However, the air marshal did not tell us how this practice would end. If the prime minister's horses run in a parliamentary form of government, then the president's horses will run in a presidential rule. The late Mr. Bhutto had even made the president his own horse! The position of the prime minister in a presidential rule would be of a presidential horse! If two or more parties cooperate with the PPP, the PPP will benefit greatly, and it will not feel isolated. The leaders of these parties will be like the members of the PPP wedding. Post Script: The TI's general assembly has decided to fully cooperate with IJI [Islami Jamhoori Ittihad], and the air marshal's decision was totally against the general assembly decision. Thus, if Asghar Khan runs against Nawaz Sharif, the TI will support the latter.

Commentary Views Bhutto Dismissal, National Problems

91AS0081A Lahore THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 31 Aug 90 pp 6, 7

[Article by Shakir Rizwani]

[Text] There is no reason to doubt that the general elections to the next parliament and provincial legislatures will be held on schedule, as announced by the President and, accordingly, all political parties are busy preparing for victory. Some are campaigning in a quiet and subtle manner while others have taken to showy processions and noisy slogan-mongering. For the country it will make little difference who wins or loses unless the government coming into power sets about in right earnest to tackle the many problems facing it. The electorate will judge the government's sincerity in the light of the action taken to tackle its problems. If little or nothing is done, the President will be justified once more to dismiss the government and invite someone else to form a new one.

There are the problems that everyone is familiar with: mass illiteracy, disgracefully poor standard of education, unemployment, ever-increasing prices of consumer commodities, chaotic law and order, corruption and police tyranny. But there are others not so commonly appreciated although they have been thrown up into bold relief by the outgoing government's total failure to administer the country, total neglect, blatant nepotism and corrupt tactics aimed at self-aggrandisement.

Considering that corruption and nepotism in some measure, great or small, prevail among the top hierarchy,—and it is so easy to get away with them,—it should be at the top of the priorities list to update the laws of the state so as to make the commission of the crime difficult and make the crime, if committed, promptly punishable. The present Constitution was framed in most untoward circumstances when the newly shaped state was an infant or less than two years and was still bleeding from the vivisection of its twenty-five-year old body. It is, therefore, wholly inadequate to meet the demands according to the peculiar psyche of the nation. Vital amendments are required.

First, it should by law be made compulsory for every candidate for election to any legislature or municipal corporation to declare his or her total assets before the polling day. If at any time after it is found that the declaration contains false statements, the person, if elected, should be looked upon as automatically to have lost his parliamentary seat and prosecuted for forgery and fraud, and further debarred for life from contesting any election to a legislature, government office or appointment thereto.

Gifts in cash or kind received by a Minister, other legislators or a Government servant by virtue of such position, must be deposited in the State treasury. Commissions on purchases of aircraft defence weaponry and whatever must be made over to the state.

All misappropriated money sent out of the country must be brought back and deposited in the State treasury and the person involved, irrespective of his official position, punished with severe sentences of fine and imprisonment.

He or she who has a scandal attached to his or her name must not be allowed to contest an election, and, if the scandal is discovered after the election the person concerned so involved must forfeit his or her seat in the legislature. The appointment of a relative to a government office must be only on recognised merit and approved by a 75 percent vote of the legislators.

Laws for all this are required on a supreme first priority basis and until the national legislature is not in session, Presidential Ordinances are called for. The dismissed Prime Minister and her mother are not the first in Pakistan's history to be accused of making illicit money by indirect bribes and nepotism and sending it abroad. Before them Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is said to have misappropriated huge gifts of money on such occasions as the Gilgit earthquake. And, indeed, how many more there are who have overnight built up huge bank accounts abroad! Obviously, appropriate legislation is required.

In other countries, the Philippines, for instance, the state head or Prime Minister demands that the moneys swindled away abroad be brought back to the nation they rightfully belong to. Mrs Corazone Aquino has repeatedly accused the late Marcos and his wife Imelda of the crime and requested the USA to assist. A Japanese Prime Minister resigned his office because of a scandal involving a geisha girl. Another notable case in Japan was that of a Minister who had received bribe-commissions on purchases abroad. Not long ago resignations by high officials in Britain had to be made for similar reasons. But in Pakistan no one makes a similar demand for similar offences and no one has enough shame to resign for a scandal.

In the light of all that led to the last Government's dismissal and the record of all other past regimes here, one cannot help but conclude that in the final analysis, there is something basically wrong with the political mentality of every section of Pakistan's social fabric. Tackling the psyche is of vital importance but it is doubtful if the politicians possess the ability to do anything about it; nor does the cure lie solely in the politician's domain.

However, anyone who aspires to a political career must understand that today politics means service to the masses and that basic to service is humility. The politician, if he or she wants to be successful, must bid goodbye to his, or her, Bara Saheb or Begum Saheba mentality. He or she most go into the villages with a blackboard on his or her back and call the folk to see him or her write the alphabet. He or she should also take

some gifts such as anti-malaria tablets for free distribution; should inquire after the common and individual's problems, note them down and do something about them. This does not mean that the politician, Minister or any other, should neglect his or her duties at the office-table. The field-work is meant to register its importance and set an example for bureaucrats and others to follow. In this way, if the practice were emulated all over the country, illiteracy could be reduced to zero within five years while the pioneer would occupy an irremovable place in the country's leadership. And similar work in other spheres would lead to similar benefits.

Yet another immediate priority concerns the police. There are two distinct steps to be taken. One, the present police must be reformed. The salaries of the lower cadre should be increased, those of the higher reduced. There should be exemplary punishment for the corrupt. Higher educational qualifications should be required of new recruits, and there should be special teaching courses for them in the colleges aimed at inculcating in them the right values of duty performance, of the civic sense and responsibilities; and last but not the least, good manners.

Two, the creation of a women's police force separate from the male at all levels from the highest to the lowest. To get women handled by strange men (the male police) is wholly un-Islamic in spirit and physical content. Besides, the greatest number of crimes involve abetment by the police and the greatest number of adultery and rape cases are committed by the police. Fictitious accusations are cooked up and women harassed and sent to the lock-up to be maltreated.

It should be made unlawful for a male member of the police to interrogate, challenge or arrest a woman, whatever her crime may be,—violation of a traffic law, theft, blackmail, adultery or even murder. Suitable modifications of the penal code may be required but the urgency is such that an immediate Presidential Ordinance is called for.

These are the most demanding subjects of the day. They are given here as examples that may be exploited for the wise politician's credit as well as the nation's good.

There are other problems, far more important indeed, but they cannot be resolved in a short time. These include poverty, unemployment, corruption at the lower levels (e.g. the clerical staff), raising the education standard, keeping prices down but a beginning can be made immediately.

It is not impossible to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor and this problem too can be taken up as soon as the next elected parliament meets. More land should be taken away from the big land-owners and distributed among the landless. The ownership ceiling should also be further curtailed and, in future, reduced from time to time until absentee landlordism is eliminated.

Report Alleges Benazir Conspired Against Army

90AS0419B Lahore SIYASI LOG in Urdu
25 Aug 90 pp 1, 8

[Article: "The President Is in Possession of Tapes of Conversations in Which Benazir Gave Information to the Enemy About National Security Secrets and He Has Documents Proving Her Treason: A Detailed Report About Activities Inimical to the Country Will Be Presented in the High Courts. Benazir Gave Rajiv Gandhi Complete Details About the Army"]

[Text] Extensive investigation is in progress concerning the giving of secrets about the country's security to the enemy and, under Benazir's supervision, the supplying of files to enemy agents concerning various important and unusual matters, which the information was then sent to an enemy country. The government of Pakistan will soon submit a detailed report in the high courts, and, if possible, will inform the public of matters relating to the endangering of the country and the heinous role played by the accused individuals.

We have information that in her protracted meeting with former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Benazir made irresponsible statements about the composition of Pakistan's armed forces and its high officials. She revealed details which would not be supplied on request to a friendly country, much less to an enemy. According to informed sources, in her talks with Rajiv Gandhi, Benazir displayed a total lack of responsibility and gave detailed information about the high officers and generals of the Pakistani armed forces. She even carried her repugnant behavior so far as to reveal to Rajiv Gandhi the views held by various Pakistani generals regarding India and to name those generals who wished to solve problems by means of war and those generals who wanted to further their aims by supporting freedom movements inside India.

We also have information to the effect that certain sensitive agencies possess complete recordings of Benazir's conversation and the recordings will be presented at the appropriate time. There is also in existence a tape of statements made by Benazir which are contrary to the interests of the country and this tape will be played when necessary.

According to political circles, when this information is released to the people, members of the Bhutto family will hide their faces in shame and even innocent individuals sympathetic to the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] will express their repugnance. We have also received information that after the affair of the supply of official secrets to the enemy was brought forward, the president thought it necessary to remove Benazir from office immediately. Further revelations are awaited.

Commentary Says Agriculture Ministry Must be Accountable

91AS0080B Lahore THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 19 Aug 90 p 4

[Article by Syed Mukhtar Hussain; quotation marks as published]

[Text] After the dismissal of the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Government, once again the subject of accountability has raised its head. The entire system is shot through and through with corruption. National interests are subordinated to individual materialistic gains. There should be no exceptions; all MNAs [Members of National Assembly] and MPAs [Members of Provincial Assembly] must face tribunals and have themselves cleared of charges of corruption and nepotism and those found guilty must be awarded deterrent punishments so that for all times to come a very few should venture to exploit their political offices.

I, as a farmer, will restrict my observations to my sector only and put on record that after banking industry, agriculture of the country has suffered most because of adhocism, lack of sound pragmatic planning and personal interests.

After twenty months, appearance of the much-awaited national agriculture report, if at all it can be called a report, is proof of the sector suffering at the hands of those who were too small for the portfolio and lacked the vision to head a team assigned to revolutionise agriculture and better the lot of small farmers, the most hard hit, i.e. the rural masses of the country forming the main chunk of our population. People's government should have been more for the people than itself and definitely much was expected of it but on the contrary it has departed leaving the agriculture of the country in a mess. We are once again 'food beggars.'

Small farmers have been the worst hit; most of them have abandoned their profession to migrate to the cities. Expansion of katchi abadis and swelling population in cities during this period will prove the disenchantment of the small farmers. The responsibility must be pinned and accepted.

Failure of the major crop of the country which sustains the ever increasing population is a crime and those responsible for it obviously deserve a censure for betraying the confidence of the nation. The wheat debacle was engineered to benefit a coterie of corrupt importers and foreign exporters suffering from overproduction. A high powered inquiry into wheat shortage will bring to surface the anti-people designs of the concerned officials. Huge amounts involved in imports must have caused a deep dent in the economy.

Deliberate bungling of the most critical input, i.e. chemical fertilizers in criminal shortfall of grains, caused a major setback on the food front. Why was it in short supply? Someone has to answer it. The fact that in most areas it was not available is a mystery which only the concerned functionaries could disclose. Wheat crop suffered badly because fertilizers were not available and when found in the black market were badly adulterated and underweight. Who were the beneficiaries at the expense of the country is another sad story which could demoralise the peasantry of the country. High prices of fertilizers was another major factor for low output per acre because small farmers could not use proper dosages for their crops. Raising of prices of inputs specially of fertilizers should have been resisted by the government as this factor alone has been responsible for giving a major setback to farm output.

Ninety percent of the small farmers were refused production loans by all banks on pretexts which were not only flimsy but also unpatriotic. Imagine a poor farmer not getting his Rs 12,000 [rupees] to Rs 14,000 production loan in kind for fertilizers, seeds, etc., because the people's government was busy squandering away national wealth in entertaining political clientage whose demands were in millions and billions. It will be rather revealing as to how many small production loans were sanctioned to the small farmers by the government. The Supervised credit scheme for the benefit of subsistence farmers was literally shelved by the government. Why? This is another factor responsible for shortfalls of various crops. Complete indifference to the agricultural sector was displayed throughout the period.

The farmers have the right to know why did major crops like wheat, cotton, rice, sugar-cane, grams and oilseeds suffer shortfalls and how much foreign exchange was spent to import these or for not exporting surpluses. Who were the beneficiaries will be an interesting discovery. Accounts abroad should also be looked into.

Low pricing of seed-cotton, sugar-cane, basmati paddy, other crops and of late high pricing of Irri paddy are steps which the peasantry will not reconcile to. National interests and economic uplift of the peasantry should have been given top-most priority.

The agriculture of the country during the last 20 months was devastated by corrupt practices, incompetence, inefficiency, adhocism, lack of planning and commitment and personal and family economic interests. Wheat, rice, potato and fertilizer scandals if thoroughly probed will surely unearth huge losses running into billions.

The farmers have the rights to demand a thorough probe into the working of the Agriculture Ministry during the 20 months which was by all means a nightmare for the farmers. The balance sheet of losses, gains, achievements and setbacks during the period will not only be an interesting public document but also most revealing for the future of agriculture of the country.

Commentary Views NAM's 'Indifference' Towards Kashmir

91AS0080A Lahore THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 19 Aug 90 pp 4, 5

[Article by Amanullah Khan; quotation marks as published]

[Text] When about three decades back Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia founded the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with support to right of self-determination and freedom movements of enthralled nations forming its main objectives, hardly could anybody imagine that one of the very three founder-members of the NAM i.e. India, would herself usurp the inherent, pledged, internationally recognised and most deserved right of self-determination of 12 million Kashmiris and would use all sorts of brutish methods to crush their freedom struggle. Equally surprising and agonising is the apathy of other NAM member States, except a negligible few, towards Kashmiris' right of self-determination and Indian savagery in Kashmir.

India has been using her diplomatic muscle to mislead the world by claiming that Kashmir was her integral and constitutional part, by dubbing Kashmiri freedom-fighters as terrorists and by shunting foreign journalists out of Kashmir and not allowing representatives of international humanitarian organisations to visit Kashmir in order to hide her own brutalities in Kashmir. The following undeniable facts prove how baseless India's aforementioned claims and how criminal her above-mentioned actions are:

India now bases her claim of Kashmir being her integral part of Kashmir's autocratic ruler's 'accession' of the State to India in October 1947. First of all the autocratic ruler of Kashmir had no legal, moral or constitutional right to make such an important decision about the future of Kashmir or to invite Indian armed forces to occupy bulk of Kashmir against the wishes of an overwhelming majority of Kashmiris as much as the head of Afghan Government had no right to invite the Soviet armed forces to Afghanistan against the wishes of the majority of Afghan people, an argument that almost all NAM member States accepted during their representatives' speeches and voting in UN General Assembly during its debates on Afghan Issue from 1983 to 1987. Moreover, India herself had accepted the so-called accession conditionally and subject to its ratification by the people through their freely and impartially expressed will and this basic and imperative provision of the 'accession' has not been fulfilled so far. Had Kashmir been an integral part of India by virtue of the aforementioned 'accession' made in October 1947, how could India's chief delegate to the UN declare on 15 January 1948 during the 227th meeting on the UN Security Council "whether she (Kashmir) should withdraw from her accession to India and either accede to Pakistan or remain independent with a right to claim admission as a Member of the United Nations, all this we have recognised to be a matter of unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir after normal life is restored there." Top Indian leaders including Pundit Nehru kept on making hundreds of similar pledges on national and international level for many years which were never fulfilled. India also accepted UN resolutions on Kashmir providing for a UN sponsored and supervised plebiscite on Kashmir to decide its future and that plebiscite has not taken place so far. Even today the official world map of the United Nations shows the entire Jammu Kashmir State (the official name of Kashmir) clearly separate from both India and Pakistan.

In the light of these undeniable facts, India's claim of Kashmir being her integral and constitutional part is utter nonsense. The only relation between India and Kashmir is that Kashmir is, practically and theoretically, a forcibly occupied colony of India.

Freedom Struggle

Kashmiris continued their freedom struggle for 40 long years peacefully. In the beginning India, on one hand, kept on dilly-dallying implementation of her aforementioned nationally and internationally made pledges on one excuse or the other and on the other hand kept on strengthening her military grip on Kashmir and after over a decade started backing out of her pledges and claiming of Kashmir to be her integral part without any kind of justification. During all this period, except for some very short periods, Kashmir prisons remained full of all those demanding their inherent and pledged right of self-determination but India did not allow its publicity on an international level with the result that the world started believing in Indian/baseless propaganda that Kashmiris had accepted Kashmir as an integral part of India and that they were satisfied and happy with that state of affairs. Some of Bishop Muzerewas of Kashmir became tools in the hands of Indian leaders to make their internationally made false propaganda more effective. In the meantime, overwhelming majority of Kashmiris, specially the youth, became restive and started thinking in terms of starting armed struggle for their cherished goal, national liberation. Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front which was already making preparations for armed struggle besides working on international level, catered to their needs and after necessary preparations, they (Kashmiri youth) started armed struggle towards the end of July 1988 which has since been going on gaining momentum.

Armed struggle for their inherent, pledged and internationally recognised right of self-determination is not only the birth-right of Kashmiris as a forcibly subjugated nation but they are also entitled to it under United Nations General Assembly Resolution No 2621 of 1970. This Resolution in its section 2 "Reaffirms (ed) the inherent right of colonial peoples to struggle by all possible means at their disposal against colonial powers which suppress their aspirations for freedom and independence." The words 'by all possible means at their

disposal' naturally include armed struggle as interpreted time and again by NAM member States who had sponsored and played a leading role in having the resolution adopted. As such, India has no right, whatsoever, to dub Kashmiri freedom-fighters as terrorists. As a matter of fact, there is only one sort of terrorism going on in Kashmir today and that is Indian State-terrorism and the following undeniable facts fully endorse it.

Indian Savagery

Over 250,000 strong Indian armed and para-military forces, deployed in Kashmir reacted like savages to Kashmiris fully justified armed struggle. During the last about two years they have shot dead about 5,000 innocent Kashmiris including men, women, children and even infants, raped hundreds of women even very young girls, arrested over 14,000 youth subjecting them to unimaginable physical and mental tortures. Hundreds of the arrested youth have been tortured to death and their dead bodies burnt or thrown into river. Over 200 unarmed and innocent men, women and children were killed on 21 January and over 250 on 21 May, 1990 alone. About the first instance the report of four representatives of the Committee for initiative on Kashmir, all Indian Hindus, who visited Kashmir after the incident reported that "on 20 January, when a group of people were proceeding to express solidarity with others who had gathered outside the Divisional Commissioner's office to protest against the atrocities of the Para-military forces, they were tear-gassed. The same night, 20 January, curfew was clamped down on the city. On the 21st a 20,000-strong procession including people from the city outskirts, passed through to the streets of Srinagar, defying curfew and protesting against the illegal searches and arrests. When the procession reached Basant Bagh in the Gow Kadal area, the para-military forces started firing upon them. According to the local police at least 60 dead bodies were recovered from the spot and taken to the police control room while unofficial sources claimed that more than 200 were killed." On 6 July, armed forces were given orders to shoot at sight any 'suspected' person, burn and demolish the houses of 'suspected' persons and arrest anybody they liked. All this can be done by a government run by savages and under jungle law. This is how the 'moral leader' of NAM member States has been treating Kashmiris demanding their fundamental human rights.

Agonising Duplicity

As stated in the beginning of the article, the main objectives of the NAM was to support freedom movements and rights of self-determination of enthralled peoples. Moreover section 3 (2) of UN General Assembly Resolution 2621 provides that the "member states (of the UN) shall render all necessary moral and material assistance to the people of colonial territories in the struggle to gain their freedom and independence." But NAM states, with only a few exceptions, have failed either to support 12 million Kashmiris' just struggle for their national emancipation or to raise their voice against the mass massacre of Kashmiris by Indians thereby violating the very basic objectives of NAM and UN resolution 2621. One Steve Bico was tortured to death by white racialist police of South Africa and the NAM member states in general and African States in particular, raised hue and cry, rightly though, on international level. But except for a negligible few, none of the Government of NAM member States has publicly uttered a single word about the savagery of Indian beasts in Kashmir. Perhaps only white persons torturing a black to death is crime in the eyes of NAM members and torturing to death of hundreds of Kashmiri freedom-fighters by the occupying Indian forces is condonable because India is NAM members' "moral leader" and "political guru," hence stands absolved of all sorts of heinous deeds. What a mockery of otherwise tall claims of NAM member states and what a naked example of duplicity and double standards.

Notwithstanding my above harsh but true observation made more in anguish than in anger, I appeal to the Governments, the people and to the media of NAM member states in the name of NAM's aims and objectives, in the name of human and humanitarian values and in the name of their own tall claims of standing for right of self-determination of subjugated nations, to do a bit of heart searching about their present apathy and indifference towards Kashmiris' just struggle for their fully deserved and pledged right of self-determination and about their turning of deaf ears of Indian savagery in Kashmir. Twelve million Kashmiris (more in number than the individual populations of about 75 NAM member states) fully deserve support from NAM and its member states to their just struggle for their fully deserved and pledged right of self-determination and steps from them conducive to compelling India to put an immediate end to the present savagery in Kashmir.

We earnestly hope NAM member states will change their present attitude and fulfil their moral and constitutional obligation about Kashmir.

Commentary Assesses Beg's Political Views

90AS0450B Karachi JANG in Urdu 27 Aug 90 p 3

[Article by Tajir Iqbal: "Search for Candidates With Integrity"]

[Excerpt] Recently, COAS [Chief of Army Staff] General Mirza Aslam Beg spoke to journalists at a dinner party arranged by Prime Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. Reactions to the general's statements are still being heard in various political circles.

Answering questions, the COAS gave a simple and direct explanation for the demise of Benazir Bhutto's government. He said, "The army had asked for power under Article 245 of the Constitution only in order to prepare the grounds for political negotiations. What occurred should have happened two or three weeks earlier. There is no problem in Sindh now. All are willing to negotiate and progress has been made in negotiating with all forces

including Jiye Sindh." (How fortunate if the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] is also included).

Listening to Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, the man in the street has reached the conclusion that refusal to give power to the army under Article 245 of the Constitution brought about the downfall of Benazir's government. Even when faced with an utterly hopeless situation, Benazir refused to hand over power to the army voluntarily.

The army displayed great patience. It watched brother killing brother. When it saw helplessness and despair on all sides, what choice did it have other than to ask for power? The alternative was martial law; but as long as the eighth amendment remains in existence, martial law is not necessary in order to overthrow the government. Of course, if the interim government is unable to maintain control over the situation, there will be no other alternative than martial law to administer the affairs of government. The other day, in an effort to besmirch the present government and kill muhajirs, MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] camps were shot at mercilessly. In what direction will these savage actions lead the country? In fact, we are not destined to enjoy any great happiness. We cannot tolerate each other. Altaf Hussain displayed generosity and wisdom when, no assailants having been caught at the scene and the investigation not yet completed, he did not at once lay the blame on his opponent, the PPP. That is the reason why MQM has not made any violent reprisals. Of course, the leader of MQM has issued an ultimatum concerning the arrest of the criminals. The army has again been stationed in Karachi. It is true that the army's real task is to guard the country's frontiers; but when the country is going through an ordeal of fire and death, the first duty of the country's real strength, embodied by the army, is to set things right. If there should be always an understanding on this between the army and the people's representatives (the party in office), what would be the harm?

A few days ago, Benazir Bhutto said, "The army is a reality with which we have to come to terms." The earlier attitude adopted by Benazir of confrontation with the army was not a suitable one. Slow ripening brings out the sweetness. The tone she adopted towards the army soon after the dismissal of the government and those who encouraged her in that attitude was not that of the friends of either the PPP or Benazir. As for General Zia, no general of his time is still around. Opposition to Zia should have ended with his death. It does not befit a Muslim to, as it were, besmirch a dead man's shroud. One wonders why we bury all things in oblivion with the passage of time, but we always keep grievances alive. The situation was not so bad when General Ayub Khan first imposed martial law on Pakistan nor when he left office (during Yahya Khan's martial law). The army (Gen. Zia) was forced to intervene during the last days of Bhutto's term of office. Thus, 24 of the 42 years following Pakistan's creation were spent under martial law or emergency conditions and, in that period, elected national assemblies were dismissed five times. The recent situation was also a critical one. If the party in office holds elections and wins, it is inevitably accused of fraud. If the army holds elections under its own supervision and hands over power to elected representatives, then after a period of time, the opposition forms a strong front and prevents the party in office from administering the affairs of the country. Both sides suffer but, as the saying goes, when rams fight, the frogs suffer the most; and here, the poor voting public are the suffering frogs. The people are learning, but the majority are still under the domination of the local influential people, large landowners, organizations, or leaders. There are only a handful whose votes are based on their convictions and courage. The change of governments resulting from these actions and the state of affairs have taught politics to our generals. When Gen. Ayub Khan and Gen. Zia took office, by their own confession they were ignorant of the ABC's of politics (the people may recall Gen. Zia's first day speech). Because of his short term in office, General Yahya Khan never succeeded in learning the art of politics; but after administering the government for a year or two, other generals would occasionally murmur, "We also are learning to play politics." After a few years, they would become accomplished politicians.

In his meeting with journalists at the state guest house, Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg answered questions not only on domestic but on international politics with intelligence and even spontaneity. Replying to a question regarding the Persian Gulf, he said, "We do not want Iraq's military strength to be weakened or destroyed because the weakening of Iraq will prove to be the weakening of the entire Muslim community." Gen. Aslam Beg's most interesting comment on domestic politics was: "If I could, I would hold elections every six months so that the people themselves would demand accountability and would stop voting for corrupt individuals; thus, only honest candidates would be left in the field." The general's statement brought to mind Hanif Ramey, the former chief minister of Punjab, who said some 15 years ago (during Bhutto's term of office): "If I can find four honest individuals, I will be able to set the affairs of the whole country in order." Even since then, Ramey has been searching for the four honest individuals and has not yet returned home. [passage omitted]

Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg is a good and noble person and his intentions also are noble but it is to be hoped that in the search for honest candidates in the elections all candidates do not disappear. After a few elections, Gen. Beg may see the field empty of candidates and ask the people, where are your candidates? And a few people may catch hold of Ghulam Haider Vaien of the barely alive Muslim League and push him forward saying, "This is the only candidate left."

Report Says Railways on Brink of Disaster

90AS0419A Islamabad HURMAT in Urdu
1-7 Aug 90 p 30

[Article by Aqeel Sahrai: "The 'In' People Regard Free Travel as Their Right: Pakistan Railway on the Brink of Disaster"]

[Text] The world continues to progress. Countries which gained their freedom after we did have forged ahead of us, while we still stand at the spot where we started our journey. Pakistan railway heads the list of those institutions in Pakistan which have given the country nothing except deficit financing. The loss suffered was at first in hundreds of thousands, then millions, and now billions. The question is, are people not buying tickets? Are the railway cars not crowded? Is cargo delivered without being booked? The question arises here as to whether the employees are stealing from the railway? Investigation shows that the answers to all these questions are in the negative. The facts are quite different; and before the issue is broached as to the real source of malfeasance and cheating. [sentence as published]

The fact is that the manner in which the present railway management and the government have sunk the boat of railway administration is unparalled in the history of the last 40 years. Trains are late daily by two, five, and sometimes eight hours and this state of affairs started after the routine accident at the Sanch Sanghi railway station. Shalimar Express, Khyber Mail, Tez Gam, Tez Rau (the present Zulfiqar Express), Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Express, Supper Express, and Karachi Express are Pakistan railway's most important trains. If one looks at the record of these trains over the last four months, one finds that they were late on an average of at least four hours daily. The manner in which the government of the people has made the railway and other institutions its house slaves is unparalleled in history. The railway minister's writ is now supreme in the railway. Two special ticket examiners were appointed to escort the relatives of Malik Faruq Azam from Bahawalpur to Karachi. Those connected with officeholders consider free travel their prerogative. The fact is that trains do not arrive late, they are made to arrive late. The railway does not incur a loss, it is made to incur losses because if the railway should prove successful, how would the road transport services of the MNA [Member of National Assembly] and MPA [Member of Provincial Assembly] succeed?

Which transport service companies are taken into consideration when setting railway timetables and why? If the answer to this question is found and the problem is solved, which has not happened so far, it will then become possible to stop the misdeeds to a great extent. Putting an end to high level misconduct in the railway is the important issue of the moment; but who will accomplish this task? There has been more confusion created in the administration of the railway under the present administration than at any other time in the past. There are no facilities of any kind on the railway cars; there are no fans or electricity; even the toilets are usually dark. The faucets are dry; the water tanks are empty; the seats are in disrepair; travel is hazardous, etc.

Transport companies have profited from this deplorable situation. Flying coaches and buses have established a credible record. Air conditioned superfast wagons and coaches transport passengers in 10 hours from Islamabad to Bahawalpur at reasonable rates. Who would want to travel by train if, to reserve a seat, he has to obtain a recommendation from the porter, plead with the booking clerk, pay bribes, etc? One cannot expect honesty from a railway employee who has paid thousands of rupees in bribes in order to obtain his job. Officers have established open rates and no one raises any questions. There is no official, from the lowest to the highest, who does not receive certain sums monthly. Those who do not take bribes are harassed under various excuses. The extent of the lack of accountability can be gauged by this incident: recently, an honest railway employee risked his life to inform the driver and guard on an important train, Awam Express, that a wheel was defective. If he had not alerted them, many lives would have been lost and the railway carriage would have been destroyed. The passengers and the guard thanked the employee. The train examiner who is the official in charge of repairing wheels and removing carriages thanked the employee in these words: "Jerk! was your mother riding in the carriage that you had to raise the alarm? You should have ignored it." It hurt me greatly to hear this. The business of the resale of tickets which are returned in great style after having been already sold once before is an important problem and deserves attention.

Misappropriation of hundreds of thousands of rupees in cargo transported by freight trains and the resulting loss to the treasury is a different story. An example should be sufficient: at one time there were many special trains called livestock special trains, commonly called milk trains, which were used for transporting animals, especially cows and buffaloes. The railway treated the people in this business in such a manner that now there are no more such trains and freight is exported and imported by trucks. Why is all this happening? What is the solution? There is a needless increase in the number of officials and each official has a separate saloon and they have their own special requirements, etc. Although the problem is a most difficult one, it can be solved; but who will bell the cat? Who will cut off the illegal income of himself and his cronies? If the present situation continues, the railway will have to shut down in a year's time. We want to ask the responsible officials of the railway and the railway ministers the following question: There has always been one minister appointed for the railway and for other departments as well; but the situation has never been as bad and the standard as low as now when there are two railway ministers. Will anyone answer this question? What was done about the worst disasters in the history of the railway? Where is the enquiry report relating to the horrible accident in Liaquatpur involving a fast train and a freight train? What happened to the report concerning the accident involving the Awami Express train in Bahawalpur? What about the crash of two passenger trains travelling on the same track between Same Sindh and Bahawalpur and the resulting destruction? And what was done, other than crocodile tears shed by the ministers, regarding the

recent horrendous accident involving the Bahauddin Zakaria Express near Sanghi railway station? Fifty thousand rupees compensation for each life lost, and even that amount did not reach the real beneficiaries but found its way into the pockets of nameless individuals with phony names. While I was writing this column, I heard the report of a bomb exploding in a Karachi Express train travelling from Karachi to Lahore; 120 people were killed. Mr. Laghari got another opportunity to shed tears and stage a political drama. The report of this incident as well will fall victim to tear shedding. For God's sake, take pity on the country and the railway; instead of increasing the number of officials, steps should be taken to increase the efficiency of the existing officials.

Investment Urged in Housing Essential

91AS0081B Lahore THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 31 Aug 90 p 6

[Text] Federal Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Senator Sartaj Aziz, has said that 2.7 lakh housing units are required annually to accommodate the 4.4 percent increase in the urban areas only. During 1988-93 the urban population will increase by 7 million and a total of 1.34 million housing units in the same period will be required to cater for this increase. In addition about 1 million families living in katchi abadis and 1 million families of slum areas will need upgrading of housing facilities during the same period.

The dimensions of housing shortage in Pakistan are truly daunting. The main reason is that the rate of investment in the housing sector is much below the need. We spend no more than 3.6 percent of the GNP [gross national product] on the housing sector. The present course of financing the sector is not the one which can meet the growing annual demand, leaving alone the backlog. Financial constraint is thus holding up the development of this depressed sector. At present the House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) and the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) are engaged in financing the housing sector. NCBs, however, prefer to avoid house financing. Such loans are only given by the banks to influential persons and not to the general public. HBFC is the biggest supplier of housing credit in the country. But it is providing less than 20 percent of the total housing finance activity and cannot help more than a few thousand people to build houses every year. There is clearly an urgent need to put more resources at the disposal of HBFC. It also requires restructuring to make it easily accessible to the people and less bureaucratic in its functioning.

The Federal Finance Minister has rightly pointed out that housing finance is essentially a concern of the private sector. The bulk of financial resources in Pakistan are however in the public sector which has not come forward to finance construction of houses. It is therefore imperative that the private sector should be induced to enter the field of house financing in a big way. For this purpose the existing law relating to mortgage of land will need to be streamlined to generate confidence in this mode of investment. It is heartening to note that a Housing Finance Corporation (HFC) with a capital of Rs 125 [rupees] million is in the offing in the private sector. Of this 20 percent will be shared by PICIC [Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation] and the remaining by the Asian Development Bank, International Finance Corporation, private sector groups and the general public. The HFC will finance up to 80 percent of a housing unit cost on monthly repayments over 10-15 years. Its clientele will be households with incomes in the range of Rs 6,000 to Rs 10,000 per month. Hopefully, the HFC will go a long way in boosting the construction of houses in the country.

Commentary Surveys Economic Evolution

91AS0055D Lahore VIEWPOINT in English 20 Sep 90 pp 25-27

[Article by Omar Noman; first paragraph is VIEWPOINT introduction; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The sections below provide a summary of macro-economic developments in the four decades of Pakistan's existence. Special reference is made to the implications of their development in terms of resource utilization and conservation. This review is followed by an analysis of the possible linkages between economic policies and processes and environmental degradation.

The 1950s—The first decade of economic policy-making was characterized by three features. First, the emphasis was on the establishment of import-substituting industries. Although consumer goods were being substituted by domestic production, all the machinery for the capital intensive industrialization drive had to be imported. This was due to the absence of a capital goods sector in Pakistan. Secondly, the agricultural sector suffered serious problems on account of official neglect in resource allocation. Consequently, the macro-economic performance was hampered by a stagnant agriculture. Finally, miserly allocations for education and health established a pattern of governmental negligence of social sector provisions, particularly for the poor. Allocations for social services were squeezed by heavy defence expenditure for military security against India.

The above mentioned framework of policy parameters had two main implications for natural resource management:

1) a positive environmental development policy emerged more by accident than design. Most of the industrial sanctions went to the port city and the new capital, Karachi. These allocative decisions were influenced by the proximity, access and market power of the traders who had migrated to Karachi. The city had a natural advantage of being a site where industrial discharges would cause, 'ceteris paribus,' the least damage to the environment and people. Karachi was sited in a rocky desert, which was not surrounded by Class I and II

agricultural land. In other words, the opportunity cost to agriculture associated with any industrial expansion around Karachi was very low. The groundwater table below the industrial sites was either non-potable or, if potable, so deep that chances of contamination were acceleration in population growth rate, which has subsequently placed such an onerous burden on the natural resource base.

The 1960s—The 60s was a period of substantial economic development. As distinctive from the stagnant 50s, there was a significant increase in per capita income. The rapid growth in GNP was based on impressive aggregate performance of both the industrial and agricultural sectors. The decade can be divided into two phases. The first phase, corresponding to the Second Five-Year Plan period (1960-65), was marked by a spurt of activity in the large-scale manufacturing sector. This growth was a response to a host of generous policy incentives. The real success of the second half of the decade was the Green Revolution. The seed-water-fertiliser package was responsible for a dramatic revival of the hitherto stagnant agricultural sector.

Four implications for natural resource use were discernible. First, the single-minded pursuit of growth objective involved a diminution of equity issues. Indeed, official policy promoted the deliberate pursuit of inequality in order to transfer incomes towards the high savers. Price signals, tax incentives, exchange rates were all directed at maximum resource extraction to achieve the growth targets. The policy-makers' priorities left little room for thought of sustainable development, involving careful natural resource use or of measures to control detrimental effects of growth on the environment. Secondly, the price signals favouring highly capital intensive industrial development had adverse implications for job creation, per unit of investment. Nontheless, there were jobs in the expanding industrial cities for migrants from rural areas. Further, credit and subsidies for tractors were displacing labour in the agricultural sector, increasing the demands on the urban infrastructure. The number of tractors increased from 2,000 in 1959 to 19,000 in 1968. Such mechanization was not germane to the Green Revolution technology, it was more a response to incentives.

The third important nature resource implication was that the Green Revolution package encouraged the use of water. Private tubewells were encouraged. There appeared to be no need for inculcating practices for the efficient use of water. The lack of care in water use, reflected in price signals to consume large quantities, subsequently pointed to the need for on-farm water management to become a key issue in conserving water resources and raising agricultural productivity.

Finally, the Green Revolution sustained the illusion that population was not a problem for Pakistan. Breaking out of the stagnation of the 50s, the agricultural sector gave the wrong signal to the policy-makers: "do not worry about population control, Pakistan can feed itself." The Government felt it could delay hard policy choices. The population growth rate went up during the decade and the relentless pressure on the natural resource base mounted.

The 1970s—The political convulsions of the late 60s, leading to the dismemberment of Pakistan, had inevitable adverse consequences for the economy. Since 1969, the growth of per capita output had been negative. The new government had, therefore, not only to revive the economy but also attend to pressing distributional issues. Public sector intervention in the economy was linked to such concerns. Land reforms and nationalisation of some industries, banks and insurance companies were followed by policies to enlarge the productive role of the public sector. In a marked reversal from the 60s, the State became the primary investor. The share of the public sector in total industrial investment grew from 5 percent in 1970-71 to 74 percent in 1976-77. The Government's aim for the expansion of social services was squeezed by the diversion of resources to large projects such as the Steel Mill. The average annual growth rate of the economy was 4.5 percent. This was a reasonable growth rate, especially in view of the uncertainties produced by institutional reform and the fact that the country had to face the consequences of two oil shocks. Most of the investment was going into long gestation period projects. There was stagnation in the commodity producing sectors. Agriculture grew at a rate less than the growth of population, leading to a decline in per capita agricultural production.

Environmentally Fortunate

Environmentally, it was fortunate that the Steel Miss was based in Karachi. The city's relative suitability as an absorber of industrial effluents—at least initially—has been noted earlier. Not so beneficial were the consequences of nationalization. A number of nationalized industries became more inefficient on account of administrative and political constraints. The failure to generate investment resources internally not only meant the neglect of maintenance expenditure but also imposed fiscal constraints on the budget. As a result resources available for social sectors were reduced. The land reform programme did not appear to have had any adverse impact on the pattern of resource use. However, it is recognized that this issue needs further exploration. In the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province], it is particularly important to examine whether the division of land had any negative effect on natural resource use and the quality of soils.

Prior to the first oil shocks, general energy prices in Pakistan were kept at fairly low levels. There were, however, exceptions in the case of certain petroleum products, such as gasoline. They were subject to high taxation. After the first oil shock this policy was modified to take account not only of the higher price of imported oil but also of the impact of high international oil prices on the opportunity cost of major indigenous commercial fuels, i.e., hydroelectric power and natural

gas. Energy prices were gradually raised towards international levels. The regulation and control of energy prices was focused on oil, gas and electricity, leaving other energy sources such as coal and firewood more or less to the private market mechanism. Average energy prices increased by 5.8 percent in the pre-oil shock decade and by 18.9 percent in the post oil-shock period. However, credit facilities were made available for financing higher energy costs and segregated tariffs were used to minimize the impact of increased energy costs on the domestic sector.

In contrast to the experience of most energy importing countries, there was little moderation in the rate of increase of energy use in Pakistan in response to the two oil shocks. With the possible exception of petroleum products, adjustments in energy prices were not sufficient to provide effective demand management. The decline in national energy productivity was due to two factors. First, the industrial sector was relatively biased in favour of energy intensive industries. Changes in production technology were not oriented to increasing energy productivity but rather to increasing capital intensity. This energy inefficient technical change was primarily stimulated by distortions in the relative factor price structure. Consequently, few effective technical innovations to increase energy efficiency were introduced and no significant conservation efforts in energy use were undertaken. The second factor was the increased energy use by consumers in the process of rapid urbanization. Electricity prices have been the slowest in reflecting the world energy crisis. The failure to initiate appropriate energy conservation measures both then and during the 1980s has meant that Pakistan will have to undergo painful adjustment in the early 90s.

The 1980s—Perhaps the most significant economic development during the late 70s and 80s was the dramatic growth of remittances from the Middle East. Manpower export eased labour market pressures with approximately 33 percent of the increase in labour force during the Fifth Plan period being absorbed by overseas migration. Remittances also eased balance of payments constraints and had an egalitarian impact, since most migrants were from a poor economic background. The aggregate growth rate was, as noted earlier, impressive but at the cost of serious structural imbalances in the economy. The pattern of infrastructural investment simply did not keep pace with the demands put on it, leading to a deterioration in infrastructure and the emergence of serious energy shortages. The informal and underground economies grew at a rapid pace. The morale of the private sector was revived after the damage inflicted in the 70s. However, the savings rate remained abysmal, partly due to confused financial reforms and persistent political uncertainty. The population growth rate increased while the social sectors, particularly education, continued to suffer from official neglect.

The last decade has been particularly damaging in relation to resource conservation. Four factors have been involved.

- the emergence of a cult of conspicuous consumption by both the elite and the families receiving recurring remittances from migrants has been noted. Further, perhaps the most invidious impetus to conspicuous waste was provided by the widespread emergence of the trading and smuggling of drugs. The socio-economic ethos was one of "resource exploitation and waste" rather than one of "development which sustains the environment."
- two developments in the industrial sector appeared to have worrying environmental effects. The first was the growth of the petro-chemical industry which, without adequate safeguards, raised concerns about adverse environmental consequences. Similar concerns were expressed about the development of engineering and steel industries, downstream from the Steel Mill. In other words, it was feared that trends in the composition of the industrial sector of Pakistan could aggravate environmental problems if the necessary rectification measures were not taken. The second feature of industrial development adversely affecting the environment related to the political turmoil in Sindh province. It was recognized that the attractiveness of Karachi as a site for industry was diminishing as the social and physical infrastructure disintegrated. This led to a greater concentration of industrial investment in the Punjab, particularly in certain industrial estates. Thus, industrial investment tended to move from a relatively benign environmental location to one where the opportunity cost of agricultural output and the effects of pollution would be greater. The need, therefore, to formulate mechanism and interventions in support of sustainable development increased.
- One of the worsening structural imbalances was the balance of payments situation. Pressures to diversify the export base led to the promotion of manufactured exports in sectors such as leather. This is a sector made up of a number of small units which are not particularly well informed about the substantial environmental damage they have been inflicting. Whilst the need to promote the leather sector has been obvious, there has been an equal need for care. That environmental costs were seen to be the price to be paid for competitiveness in international markets posed a danger. There has been a need for interventions in the form, possibly, of subsidies to encourage certain practices and of price signals to discourage unnecessarily harmful practices. It was recognized that the technical and cost structure of the leather industry would have to be studied before a precise package could be recommended.
- Another structural imbalance arose from the acute fiscal difficulties of the Government. There was great pressure to reduce expenditure, including subsidies, and to raise domestic resources. In this environment, the Government was not in a position to finance environmentally sound programmes and projects. Aid donors recognized the increasing need for corrective environmental measures to be financed. At the same time, consideration was given to whether the

increasingly stringent conditionalities being negotiated by the donors should incorporate necessary environmental measures.

The present perspective—Having pointed to the increasingly difficult environmental situation, it is perhaps heartening to note a positive development. The Government of Pakistan has, since the mid-80s, shown for the first time a concern for the need to develop a sustainable development strategy. The patchy efforts so far should not detract from the significance of official acknowledgement of the scale of the problem. The Government is moving towards the first stage of documenting and analyzing the problem of environmental degradation. In the second stage, of finding the resources and formulating the policies for sustainable development, the planners shall at least be able to rely on the international donor community and regional allies in forums such as SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] for assistance. It should, however, be stressed that there is a wide gap between the Government's rhetoric and implementation. Environmental concerns remain entirely peripheral to policy-makers. There often seems to be a tendency for officials to view conservation concerns as the natural domain of industrially polluted rich societies. A token gesture is made towards acknowledging sustainable development issues, but the suspicion remains that they are being seen as a fashionable trend imposed by the West. A deep appreciation of Pakistan's natural resource needs appears to be missing.

This attitude must change if any significant progress is to be made in implementing sustainable development policies. It should not be a situation in which the rich conserve whilst the poor exploit natural resources.