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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Court Orders Release of Palestinian Detainee

JN2705152089 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic
24 May 89 p 4

[Text] The southern Cairo fourth sub-district court last Thursday [18 May] decided to release the Palestinian detainee, Hamad Ahmad Hasan al-'Uwaysi, who is accused of attempting to smuggle material and cash aid to the Palestinians through occupied Rafah to support the intifadah [uprising].

Hamad al-'Uwaysi is expected to remain detained for another 15 days before being released, unless the interior minister objects to the decision to release him according to the emergency law.

It is worth mentioning that among the Palestinians detained with al-'Uwaysi are al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Razzaq and Ibrahim Muhammad Isma'il. Their advocates are Nabil al-Hilali and Sayyid Abu-Zayd.

Agreement Reached on Eliminating Entry Visas With Algeria

NC1306152789 Cairo Radio in Arabic
1400 GMT 13 Jun 89

[Text] The Egyptian-Algerian consular joint committee resumed talks at the Foreign Ministry today to discuss measures to facilitate movement between the two countries by Egyptian and Algerian citizens. The two sides showed an understanding of the need to resolve the problems facing the two countries' nationals and an agreement was reached to eliminate the need for entry visas for citizens of the two countries.

The head of the Algerian consular team praised Egyptian-Algerian relations and noted that these talks reflect the two countries' desire to promote and bolster bilateral relations in all fields.

Ambassador 'Abd-al-Qadir Salamah, head of the Egyptian team to the talks, said there is a mutual desire by the two states to lay down the bases for easing movement between the two countries by their nationals and for resolving any problems or obstacles to the development of Egyptian-Algerian ties.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Joint Soviet-PLO Strategy for International Conference

44040370B Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic
23 Mar 89 p 15

[Interview with PLO executive committee member, Sulayman al-Najjab in Tunis, by Bilqasim Hasan; date unspecified]

[Excerpt] AL-WATAN interviewed Sulayman al-Najjab, a member of the PLO executive committee following his participation in successful, fruitful PLO-Soviet discussions and contacts in Cairo as a member of a Palestinian

delegation headed by PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat. These discussions and contacts brought together Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, in the context of his tour of Arab capitals directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and a number of governmental officials and Egyptian opposition leaders.

[AL-WATAN] By virtue of your participation in the Palestinian delegation that met in Cairo with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, can you present to us the results of the Palestinian-Soviet discussions, and the new Soviet proposals for solving the Middle East problem? What are the possibilities of convening an international peace conference, as advocated by the Soviet Union in the framework of a peaceful, comprehensive solution to this problem?

[Al-Najjab] Shevardnadze's Middle East tour is basically a process undertaken in solidarity with, and support of, the Palestinian peace offensive and the intifadah [Palestinian uprising]. Discussions between the Soviet delegation and the Palestinian delegation, headed by Yasir 'Arafat, focused on examining the enormous changes imposed by the intifadah and the decisions made by the Palestine National Council [PNC] in its 17th session. They also focused on exploiting these changes to prepare for an international conference.

The process of preparing for a peace conference has been limited to efforts to form a preparatory committee composed of the permanent member-states of the Security Council. During the Soviet-PLO discussions, the Soviet side proposed new ideas to broaden this process, and to make it more comprehensive than just a preparatory committee, inasmuch as the significant given facts and positive changes necessitate a broader and more diversified preparation process, without disregarding the preparatory committee itself of course. The main directions to be taken in preparing for a peace conference could be based on:

1. The role of the Security Council, be it all of its members, or its permanent members.
2. The role of the UN, especially the role of the secretary-general: What is proposed and sought in this regard is the appointment of a representative with international stature and respect to the secretary-general. This function of this representative would be to hold contacts and consultations with all parties to the conflict, and to surmount obstacles blocking the way of an international conference.
3. The role of bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral direct contacts and meetings between the parties to the conflict in preparation for the convocation of an international conference.
4. The role of western Europe, as well as the roles of different regional and international organizations.

The process of creating the framework for this expanded preparation process is to occur over a period of six to nine months. These ideas and proposals are based on the extensive political activity undertaken in the recent period. This activity has opened up new, wideranging possibilities for the broadest possible mobilization in preparation for an international conference.

This preparation process naturally has another role, namely the most extensive mobilization possible of capabilities to pressure Israel to stop the crimes which it is perpetrating against our people in the occupied territories, and to guarantee our people's protection.

The two sides were in complete agreement regarding this important issue. We also made the Soviet delegation understand that the other parties have supported these proposals, with the exception of the Israeli party, which continues to reject the idea of an international conference, and still adheres to a somewhat improved "Camp David" formula.

In these discussions, the Soviet party appraised the international political position on the PLO, the resolutions of the PNC, and the intifadah. Also, the discussions re-examined the broad scope in which to coordinate Soviet and PLO ideas and positions. The Soviet delegation emphasized the special importance of the step taken by the two parties previously in forming a joint Soviet-PLO coordination committee. The Cairo discussions have opened new horizons of activity for this committee.

In addition to dealing with international efforts to prepare for an international conference, the two delegations discussed the importance of Arab efforts to prepare for such a conference. In this respect, the Palestinian leadership was pleased with Soviet support for the ideas which it proposed, including its proposal that there be a meeting between the Arab parties which would participate in an international conference, namely, "the PLO, Syria, Egypt and Jordan." The Soviet leadership also informed us that Syria, Jordan and Egypt support this proposal, which places before us the task of expediting the convocation of such a meeting as soon as possible.

The Arab Committee of Seven certainly has an important role in Arab preparations for an international conference through their activity in the capitals of the permanent members of the Security Council and other countries, based on a unified Arab position founded on the decisions of the Algeria summit and 19th session of the PNC. In preparing for this conference, the efforts of each Arab state must be employed by means of its relations and contact with countries having a role in preparing for an international conference.

The far-reaching political activity begun in the region by Shevardnadze's visit is confronting a slow-paced, dawdling U.S. and Israeli position, which aims to consume time, and thereby absorb the thrust of Palestinian and

international movement toward an international conference. This activity is focusing anew on the Middle East problem—and its core, the Palestinian problem—as a primary, international concern. It is also concentrating on blocking maneuvers to concoct alternative solutions, and to revisit the "Camp David" whirlpool, which shuns a just settlement that provides for Israel's withdrawal from all lands occupied in 1967; the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital; the adoption of security and peace measures for all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestinian state and Israel; and the implementation of a settlement through an international conference under UN supervision, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region, including the PLO, inasmuch as it is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

This preparation process aims to skip over the obstacle standing in the way of an international conference. This obstacle, to be exact, is represented by the position of the rulers of Israel and the United States. [passage omitted]

PFLP Leader Discusses Position on Negotiations
44040370A Paris AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI in Arabic
Mar 89 pp 6-9, 31

[Text] An interview with George Habash has a special, distinctive flavor, perhaps because the "sage" of the Palestinian revolution possesses a comprehensive and exacting view of the current situation in terms of its Palestinian, Arab and international dimensions. At the same time, he is able to discern a ray of hope emerging from the darkness that has settled over the current Arab situation—a ray extending toward the future being created by the toiling Arab masses.

As the brave Palestinian uprising entered its sixteenth month, AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI conducted this comprehensive interview with comrade Dr George Habash, the general secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP].

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] Despite the enormous achievements of the intifadah [Palestinian uprising], an objective analysis of the local and regional changes does not suggest a quick solution. Nor would it suggest that the desired solution has come "within a stone's throw," to use the prevalent expression. Do you see any danger being posed to the future of the Palestinian struggle by the stepped-up promotion of delusions regarding dramatic changes in the position of the enemies, and the policies of reactionary Arab regimes? What are the most salient consequences of this danger, and how can it be eliminated?

[Habash] First of all, let me state that, in our view, the desired solution at this stage is a "state and return [or 'a nation and repatriation']—reflecting the rhyming of these

two Arabic terms, which recur throughout the interview], in other words, a phased program, not the strategic program of the PLO. Our basis for maintaining this is an objective analysis of international circumstances firstly, regional circumstances secondly, and local circumstances thirdly.

After clarifying this point, I would like to clarify a second, central point, namely that the Unified National Command of the Intifadah, in its communique dated 18 January 1988, promoted the slogan of freedom and independence, meaning the complete removal of the occupation from the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, and the replacement of the occupation authority with the authority of the Palestinian masses. With the continuation of the intifadah, the Jordanian regime was compelled on 31 July 1988 to announce the severance of its tie. In other words, it announced that it has no desire to restore its authority over the Palestinian West Bank. Regardless of the factors which motivated this announcement, when the Palestine National Council [PNC] met on 12 November 1988 in Algiers, its only option in view of these developments was to proclaim a Palestinian state.

What I meant to say is that the intifadah, the slogan which it has promoted, its continuation for this duration of time despite all attempts at repression and exemplary punishment, and its political effects, have now enjoined the duty of a continuous, tireless struggle to establish a Palestinian state on the land.

Nonetheless, to the same extent that I wish to strengthen the legitimacy, soundness, and necessity of this slogan, and its representation of the interests of the masses, I am also concerned that our masses know and realize that the actualization of this slogan, namely the establishment of a Palestinian state on the land, constitutes a long, complex, exhausting process of struggle, necessitating the causation of tangible changes in the balance of power compelling the enemy to withdraw completely from the Palestinian lands which it occupied in 1967, and to concede to the Palestinian people the right to self-determination regarding return and establishing an independent state. In other words, the proclamation of a Palestinian state, as we understand it, is a challenging program, which will be achieved by the execution of a number of missions of struggle put before our Palestinian and Arab masses and world progressive forces to be carried out and completed for the Palestinian state to become, technically, "within a stone's throw," as all hope and want.

Why do I say this? The intifadah engendered significant effects on all levels. It is our duty to see these effects clearly and to emphasize them constantly to the Palestinian and Arab masses. After that, however, we will constantly be demanding a response to the following question: What is the position of the Zionist institution?

What is the official position of the Zionist entity with regard to a Palestinian state and the legitimate, national rights of the Palestinian people?

Only a year after it began, the intifadah has affected the economy of the Zionist entity, causing a 3.5-percent reduction in the Israeli GNP [gross national product]. We cannot underestimate this tangible effect and other multifaceted effects of the intifadah on Israel, which are impossible to enumerate at present. Having said that, we must again ask ourselves: What is Israel's position on a Palestinian state and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people? To be precise, I do not mean the position of the Israeli communist party, or the Peace Now movement, or the numerous Jewish organizations calling for the need to withdraw. While I appreciate and esteem these forces and their positions, I feel that it is necessary to clarify a pivotal point, namely the need for a precise reading of the size of these forces, and the extent of their influence on official, Israeli decisionmaking. These forces still constitute a secondary phenomenon in relation to Israel as a whole. Perhaps the most salient phenomenon is the trend towards the right, evident in Knesset elections and in the recent local and municipal elections. So far, the official Israeli position continues to be one of absolute refusal to recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. It also rejects an international conference as a framework for the settlement of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict and the Arab-Zionist conflict. This means that we are in need of a national, patriotic [illegible] struggle in order to force Israel to accept the principle of negotiations with the PLO in the framework of an international conference.

These remarks do not mean that the intifadah has not brought about a change in the official Israeli political position regarding the Palestinian topic. Whoever follows matters closely, can see a number of changes in this position as a result of the continuation and radicalization [tajdhir] of the intifadah, and the extent of its effects and repercussions. Initially, the official Israeli position was to suppress the intifadah, and to refrain from discussing any offer of a political solution. After a period of time, the official position developed into suppression of the intifadah, and a willingness to offer a political solution following the suppression of the intifadah. In recent months, there has been discussion of a willingness to offer a political solution amid the continuation of the intifadah through discussions with Palestinians who have no connections with the PLO. This position, in turn, developed into a willingness to discuss a political solution with Palestinians whom Israel recognizes as having some connection with the PLO, without stipulating the cessation of the intifadah.

As I view this gradual progression in the official Israeli position, I am at pains to emphasize that this official position has not yet reached the level of willingness to hold a dialogue with the PLO in the framework of an international conference. Again, what does this remark mean? It means that we are facing a mission of struggle

and a battle to bring about a change in the balance of forces, in order to force the Zionist entity to recognize the PLO, and to negotiate with it in the framework of an international conference.

Upon effecting such a change in the balance of forces, we will find ourselves facing a new dilemma, which we can solve only by bringing about yet another new change in the balance of forces. This dilemma will be represented by Israel barricading itself behind the statement that a solution to the Palestinian problem can be reached through the Jordanian option. This is the position announced by the new American secretary of state, who stated, in effect, that the start of discussions with the PLO does not mean American acceptance of the principle of a Palestinian state, and that the American administration still believes that the Palestinian problem can be solved through a confederation with Jordan prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Therefore, we will be required to effect a higher-order change in the balance of power in favor of the Palestinian people in order to impose on the Zionist entity the fact that the title of negotiations is "the Palestinian state and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination." In order for us to be technical and precise, we will subsequently need to effect a third change in the balance of power to our advantage. This third change will guarantee that we adopt for the Palestinian state—through discussions and negotiations in an international conference—the content proclaimed by the independence document approved by the PNC in its last session. When the Zionist enemy is compelled to accept the topic, a Palestinian state, as the title of negotiations, it will again barricade itself behind five basic issues contrary to our legitimate national rights, which were established by international law [shar'iyah], and which constitute the basis for the announcement of the independence document, and the PLO's decisions in the last PNC session held in Algiers.

The Zionist entity will barricade itself by 1) rejecting Jerusalem as the capital of our state, 2) not withdrawing fully from all territories occupied in 1967, 3) maintaining its colonialist settlements, 4) insisting that the Palestinian state be unarmed when Israel possess every type of weapon, including nuclear weapons, and finally, 5) exchanging a state for the right to return.

International law gives us the right to return. It gives us the full right to reclaim all Palestinian lands occupied in 1967, and to establish a sovereign state like all other states in the United Nations. We accept an international conference, and attach value and importance to it, because it places Israel in opposition to international law.

The preceding remarks are meant to indicate that it is dangerous to underestimate the distance still separating us from a desirable solution to the Palestinian problem; that the establishment of a Palestinian state, as we

understand it, is a mission of struggle; and that the task of Arab and Palestinian revolutionary, progressive, national forces is to avoid delusions, and to position the masses so that they face their responsibility for effecting the required change in the balance of forces in order for us to attain the desired solution.

We in the PFLP, in the light of this view, have defined a group of Palestinian and Arab missions which we feel it is our duty to present before our masses in order to attain the desired solution: a nation and repatriation.

In the Palestinian sphere specifically, we defined the following tasks:

The continuation, taking root, and escalation of the intifadah; provision of the highest level of support to the intifadah by the Palestinian masses in the 1948 area; support of the intifadah by Jewish democratic forces inside Palestine; democratic reform in the PLO; political defense of the intifadah based on the validity of the political line which is being adopted by the PLO; support of the intifadah by the PLO and the masses dispersed abroad.

Each of these tasks is perfectly clear in the minds of the cadres of our front. By accomplishing these tasks, we will energize the Palestinian link as the master activity link for producing a superabundance of positive effects on all levels as a result of the intifadah.

In this way, we will eliminate the dangers posed by the delusions which some are promoting, consciously and unconsciously.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] There is the phenomenon of general Arab stagnation at the level of the masses. Arab regimes have the initiative and are moving actively and flexibly with maneuvers and camouflage to contain the intifadah, and to subsequently bypass and abort the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people after the intifadah has been "extinguished." How can we treat this imbalance on the following two levels?:

First: The detection and thwarting of the conspiracies of Arab reactionism and its subordinate regimes, especially Egypt and Jordan.

Second: What is your diagnosis of the causes of the stagnation of the masses in the Arab sphere, and the responsibility of the left for this stagnation? What is your advice regarding the solidarity movement, the common struggle, and the creation of the appropriate formula at the national level now that the previous formula has collapsed and disintegrated.?

[Habash] The retention of the reigns of initiative on the part of the reactionary regimes is closely linked to the weakness of the nationalistic regimes on the one hand, and to the crisis being experienced by the Arab national liberation movement on the other.

Since the first month of the intifadah, the PFLP has held serious contacts with the national regimes. Our aim was for these regimes to serve as the Arab nursemaid of the intifadah, providing it with popular, media, political, military, and material support by opening the Arab fronts, so that the intifadah could assume its national, patriotic scale and dimension. I regret that I must note with great sorrow that these regimes were unable to fulfill such a role.

I am not belittling the role played by these regimes in supporting the Palestinian revolution, and in the Arab-Zionist struggle in general. These regimes were responsible for the Baghdad summit decisions which aimed to isolate the Camp David path, and they succeeded at that for a while. They also formed a steadfastness front which played a role in delaying the breakdown caused by the Camp David accords. However, these regimes, because of developments in their structure, as well as other reasons pertaining to each one of them individually, were no longer able to maintain the initiative. This permitted the Camp David regime and the Jordanian regime, known for the depth of their ties to American imperialism, to take the initiative, and to play an active role, as you indicated in your question.

The detection and thwarting of Arab, reactionary conspiracies and their subordinate regimes, especially Egypt and Jordan, requires continued propaganda and agitation activities which clearly and scientifically demonstrate the true essence of the position held by Arab reactionism and the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes regarding the Arab national liberation movement in general, and the Palestinian national liberation movement and the intifadah in particular. It also requires that we explain the changes which have occurred in the reactionary position, so that reactionary regimes will no longer be able to maneuver and deceive national forces or the masses.

What was the initial position of Arab reactionism on the intifadah in its first months? Did not this reactionism attempt to delay the convocation of the summit conference urged by Algeria, since this reactionism thought that the intifadah would come to an end after several weeks or months. Was it not in the first months of the intifadah that Husni Mubarak proposed his famous initiative to stop the intifadah in exchange for a cessation of settlement activity?

What was the position of the Jordanian regime regarding the Schultz initiative, which aimed to abort the intifadah?

How do you explain the change which occurred in the position of reactionism, and the position of the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes?

The continuation and evolution of the intifadah provides the only explanation as to why Arab reactionism and the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes recognized the

Palestinian state, after their goal had been to extinguish and outflank the intifadah. Moreover, by recognizing the Palestinian state, they aim to influence the PLO's executive leadership regarding the possibility of returning to the Jordanian option. If, in their view, the establishment of a Palestinian state proves unfeasible, they could say, to the world and to the PLO leadership, that they had exerted every effort to support the establishment of a Palestinian state, however, in the light of the difficulties obstructing the establishment of a Palestinian state, why does the PLO leadership not be more realistic and satisfy itself with possible solutions?

Our masses must always clearly recognize the true essence of the reactionary position. They must possess an explanation for the positions adopted by reactionism, and be cognizant of the maneuvers carried out by reactionism. This is a primary, basic point with regard to thwarting the conspiracies of Arab reactionism.

The self-created factor—meaning the leadership of the Palestinian and Arab national liberation movement—is naturally the decisive factor in treating the imbalance to which you referred in your question.

The second part of your question—namely, the reasons for the stagnation of the masses in the Arab sphere, the responsibility of the left for this stagnation, and ways to treat it—leads us to an interrelated, theoretical issue facing every Arab nationalist in this phase. I am referring to the crisis being experienced by the Arab national liberation movement. Does a crisis really exist? What is its nature? What is its diagnosis? How do we treat it strategically? How do we treat it tactically?

We in the PFLP believe that the Arab national liberation movement is experiencing a true crisis in this phase of its history. The greatest indication of this crisis is the continuation of our people's uprising in the Palestinian bank and the strip amid the inability of the Arab national liberation movement to mobilize all of the capabilities and resources of the Arab political scene in its entirety to support the uprising, and to prescribe official policies for the Arab regimes, which would render the Arab link strong, firm and effective in order to force American and Zionist imperialism to concede the right of the Palestinian people to return and establish a state, and which would pose a true threat to imperialist interests if American and Zionist imperialism continued to deny these rights. The intifadah was preceded by the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli forces and the latter's occupation of an Arab capital for the first time. The bravery with which the forces of the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement faced this invasion in the absence of an accompanying large-scale, effective, Arab movement involving the masses, served general notice to the international, imperialist, American administration that Zionists and imperialists do not have free access to the Arab fatherland.

We do not belittle the popular Arab reactions which accompanied these events. However, everyone knows that these reactions were not so enduring or profound as to tangibly affect the plans of the enemy camp. Just as our Palestinian and Lebanese masses experienced feelings of pain and bitterness as a result of the Arab situation during the invasion of Lebanon, true nationalists and the popular Arab masses are now able to sense the extent of the pain being felt by our masses in occupied, usurped Palestine as a result of this mass stagnation, which impedes the activity of the Arab link and its provision of tangible support to achieve the goal of nation and repatriation, especially when these masses remember the slogan—spoken with such elevated concern by the Arab regimes and some Arab forces—that the Palestinian problem is the central problem of all of the Arab regimes and the Arab masses.

Acknowledgement of the existence of such a crisis is the first step towards treating it, for how can a sick person seek treatment if he feels healthy and as fine as could be. Diagnosis of the crisis follows its acknowledgement.

The PFLP's diagnosis of this crisis hinges on two main pivots. The first is that the Arab national liberation movement, after the calamity in Palestine in 1948, came to be led by a nationalistic, petite bourgeoisie. Under this leadership, this movement was able to achieve important victories that enabled it to obtain power, after which it achieved historical victories and achievements thanks to the masses, who rallied around the slogans which it promoted. However, after a number of years in power, the class structure of this leadership underwent a process of change and transformation, and gradually became a bureaucratic bourgeoisie (state bourgeoisie), whose interests had again become intertwined with those of the classes whom it had deposed from power previously (i.e., the compradors, the petty bourgeoisie, and the remnants of feudalism).

After undergoing these changes, the leadership of the national liberation movement was no longer able to champion a movement of the masses. How could this have happened when the interests of the class in power clashed with those of the masses and the democratic, liberationist movement of the masses.

This leadership continued to mouth lofty-sounding patriotic, liberationist and nationalist slogans, thus complicating matters further, since certain sectors of the masses were deceived by such slogans, and by the previous history of these leaders, who were in fact on the road to another camp, if they had not already reached it in several countries.

The nature of the ideological and class structure of the leadership of the national liberation leadership—meaning bourgeois ideology and class—explains the crisis which the national liberation movement is currently experiencing.

However, in addition to this pivot, there is a second pivot, represented by the crisis of the alternative—meaning the left, the left of the Arab national liberation movement—which is supposed to represent the radical interests of the workers, the peasants and all toilers. The fact that this current has so far been unable to assume the leadership of a movement of the masses requires a special analysis. What I can say in the way of headings is that this left has been unable to Arabicize Marxism, and apply it creatively and actively to Arab reality; nor has it gone beyond merely aspiring to play a leadership role in the national liberationist revolution. It has also maintained erroneous positions on national problems (the problem of unity, and the problem of Palestine), and has committed a number of theoretical and political errors pertaining to methods, forms of struggle, the assumption of power, non-capitalist development, the formation of alliances, and the struggle with the national bourgeoisie. All of these factors have so far rendered the left incapable of leading a movement of the masses.

We do of course distinguish between the crisis of the bourgeois wing of the Arab national liberation movement, and that of its left wing. The bourgeois wing is experiencing a structural crisis pertaining to the nature of the bourgeoisie, and its inability to complete the democratic national revolution due to the fact that the bourgeoisie in third world countries is necessarily subordinate to world capitalism. The crisis of the alternative, i.e., the crisis of the left, on the other hand, is not a structural crisis. It can be redressed through an integral vision and a combative spirit. The party structure is based not on centralism, but on democratic centralism.

Our perception of the importance of diagnosis to the start of treatment of the crisis requires that we sincerely and humbly emphasize that we do not claim to be correct and infallible regarding this topic. Therefore, we call for the creation of a democratic forum, conferences and meetings, through which it will be possible to derive the most correct, sound diagnosis, on the sole basis of which strategic tasks to cure this crisis can be prescribed.

Regarding tactical treatment, we propose that the intifadah be the pivot of activity of all cells and forces of the Arab revolution. A movement of solidarity and joint struggle in support of the intifadah will be set in motion according to determined programs, which can be implemented by a group of forces whose circumstances enable them to rally around this slogan.

I do not believe that we are currently able to propose a formula which includes all revolutionary, progressive, nationalist forces at the national level now that the previous formula has collapsed and disintegrated. Gradual work, according to my aforementioned proposal, may be the way to create such a formula at the national level in the future.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] We share your concern regarding Egypt's return to, and growing influence in, the Arab sphere. How do you view PLO-Egyptian relations, and Egypt's return to the Arab League?

[Habash] The special character of the role of the Egyptian regime is represented by the Camp David accords, and by Egypt's commitment to these accords to this very day.

The danger of the special character of this role becomes clear when we closely examine the nature, essence and goals of the Zionist entity, and its function in the Arab region. The Zionist entity aims not only to obliterate the Palestinian identity and personality, but also to play the role of policeman in the entire Arab region.

I am referring to a policeman who strives to subject the Arab region to the will and interests of imperialism. This explains the strategic alliance between the Zionist entity and the American administration. It also explains the statements made by President Reagan, on more than one occasion, that Israel represents a strategic treasure for the U.S. and its interests.

Furthermore, it explains our position as a popular front, when we maintain that we in Palestine are not just facing an aggregation of 3.5 million Jews, whose presence in Palestine was imposed by historical, international circumstances. Rather, we are facing—in terms of its scientific definition, i.e., its main external appearance—the phenomenon of colonial settlement, which imperialism has historically striven to create, form and sustain in order to serve its interests in the region.

How can we understand the Camp David accords in this light? Without embellishment, the Camp David accords signify the capitulation of the Egyptian regime to this invasion of colonial settlers, which aims to subjugate the region to worldwide, imperialist interests. The most significant question emerging from the backdrop of the continued Arabization of this capitulation, is to what extent can the Palestinian people successfully resist this invasion in view of its engulfment of all the Arab states. For our part, we firmly opposed the visit made by PLO chairman Arafat to Cairo in 1983. We strove in the National Unity Council in 1987—and are still striving—to form a relationship with this regime based on its renunciation of the Camp David accords. We are facing an extremely grave matter. When the Camp David program comes to include the entire Arab region, and official Arab solidarity with the Palestinian cause and people has become transformed into the level of unity of Switzerland, or Finland or Sweden, a major blow will have struck the Palestinian national struggle and the Arab liberationist struggle; talk of the nationalism of the battle will then be a cause for mockery.

It is not enough that the Egyptian regime claims that the Palestinian part of the Camp David accords is suspended, terminated and all but finished. Even if this

statement were correct, the Egyptian part of the Camp David accords still poses serious dangers to the Arab struggle and the Arab nation.

When the Egyptian regime prides itself on its recognition of the Palestinian state, and receives the PLO leadership with open arms, the impression I receive is that the goal of Egypt's position is to obscure the danger posed by the Egyptian part of the fatal accords. I am reminded of the adulteress who wishes to obscure her sin of adultery by giving alms. If only she would stop committing adultery and not give alms.

When the Egyptian regime concluded the Camp David accords, the Arab summit held in Baghdad made decisions aimed at isolating the Camp David path, and encircling it in preparation for overthrowing it. In addition, a unity charter was established between Iraq and Syria, and a steadfastness and resistance front was established. However, developments pertaining to the structure of the nationalist regimes, in addition to the intensification of the imperialist attack against these regimes, did not enable them to remain steadfast in the face of this collapse nor deter it. I regret to say that we are now facing the phenomenon of the Arabization of the Camp David path, not its besiegement and isolation. The convocation of the next Arab summit, with the attendance of the Egyptian regime accompanied by the Camp David accords, and the continued raising of the Zionist flag in the skies of Cairo, entitles, nay obliges, all Arab nationalists to announce the complete collapse of the Arab regime in the face of the Zionist invasion. This summit, regardless of the nature of the political statement which will be issued by it, signals the complete collapse of the Arab regime and its capitulation to the Zionist invasion, the policeman of imperialism.

These remarks, which seem sad and painful on the surface, contain the beginning of the fulfillment of the objective circumstances for the crystallization and growth of a movement of the Arab masses, which can in no way capitulate to this invasion, as this would be contrary to the logic of history. I hope these remarks clarify the special character of Egypt's role, and the role of its vanguard and masses in leading the next phase of the revival.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] How do you view the line separating "forced" maneuvering and concessions from apostasy and the abandonment of demands, aspirations and fixed principles which must not be budged?

[Habash] Revolutionary action does not always proceed on an ascending, straight line. Any scientific, accurate study of revolutions which occurred in this century indicates the importance and need for realizing this truth. After revolution became a "science," a number of laws, rules and principles of this science took shape regarding strategy, tactics and the need for some revolutions in interrelated historical periods to resort to negotiated settlements. However, the application of these

rules requires precision, which is known as the art of leadership. It is not enough *that we discuss the legitimacy of a negotiated settlement and the need for it in some periods. We must also be aware, as proven by experience, that there is a difference between one settlement and another, between compulsory settlements and optional settlements. It does not suffice for us to discuss the importance of tactics. We must also discuss the need and method for linking tactics and strategy.

I will answer this question based on the reality of the Palestinian sphere, which is perhaps the most outstanding example that can address these topics. As a Palestinian revolution, our current proposal to solve our problem is represented by return and the establishment of a Palestinian state. This proposal is made in the light of international reality in general, and in this period of "perestroyka" and new political thinking in particular. It is also made in the light of Arab reality, i.e., the impotency and capitulation of the Arab regime in the face of the Zionist invasion, and the experience of 40 years of Palestinian and Arab confrontation with the Zionist entity. I do not believe that this position is erroneous. Rather, the error lies in proposing super-leftist, verbal positions, which cannot be achieved in the light of visible reality. Moreover, we might become compelled to enter into several negotiated settlements in order to achieve this objective.

We can understand all of that, and are moreover behaving in accordance with it. However, we cannot understand recognition of Israel's right to exist, when Israel refuses to recognize the PLO, let alone a Palestinian state. We consider this recognition a gratuitous, damaging and disadvantageous concession.

The same applies to statements made by Palestinian officials dealing with the cessation of combat operations against the Zionist army from Lebanese borders, despite the need established by the PNC to escalate the armed struggle from all Arab borders. The same applies to statements about the possibility of establishing a confederation between Jordan, Israel and a Palestinian state. The same applies to acceptance of the fact that the discussions that the U.S. was compelled to start with the PLO are being transformed into the PLO's provision of information services to this administration. The same applies to hints of a willingness to renounce the charter and the right to return, or acceptance of an disarmed state.

The path of gratuitous concessions produces obstinacy on the part of the Zionist entity and the American administration on the one hand, and the weakening of the internal Palestinian and Arab front on the other hand.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] There is a quasi-consensus on the positivism of the tactic and means represented by the convocation of an international conference in the framework of the concept adopted by progressive forces. In

contradistinction, the other parties and the right are calling for concessions, which void a conference of its meaning, strip it of the necessary guarantees, and reduce it to a form of, and cover for, direct, bilateral negotiations. Is there room for making concessions regarding the guarantees of this conference? What are the possible limits to such concessions?

[Habash] The forces which will attempt to void an international conference of its meaning are numerous and active. After the American administration and Peres began to discuss acceptance of the principle of an international conference, it is natural that act as a pressuring current to pierce this conference, because it has deviated from its objective. We are not permitted to forget that the Jordanian regime and the Egyptian regime want no more from this conference than an umbrella for direct negotiations. This also applies to the British government and its perception of a conference.

This compels the Palestinian, Syrian, Soviet, Chinese, and perhaps French parties to define their understanding of a conference, its goals and the manner by which these goals will be attained.

The fact that the Palestinian problem is the essence of the Arab-Zionist struggle compels the PLO to play a primary, active role in responding to the following question: What do you want from this conference, and how will you attain what you want.

Our desire regarding this conference is for international law to support us by enforcing—with all of its weight and power—our national, legitimate rights, which UN organizations have established. The Palestinian leadership is not permitted to concede rights established by international law, or resolutions made by the UN and the Security Council. Neither the PFLP nor the PLO made these resolutions. They were made by UN organizations. The Palestinian leadership is not permitted to concede one speck of any right provided to it by international law. The world is currently calling for the activation of the role of the UN in solving regional conflicts. How can the UN play this role, and gain the trust of peoples, if international society and an international conference do not uphold UN resolutions.

Regarding the purpose and content of an international conference, in order for us to attain our objective, such a conference must enjoy mandatory authorities which enable it to impose the will of international society.

It is clear that Israel has opposed the will of international society for a long time. Whoever knows the nature of this entity already knows that it is unable to accept the application of the decisions of international society through dialogue.

The unified national command of the intifadah in the interior, which knows better than anyone the true essence and nature of this entity, uses the expression "an

effective international conference with mandatory powers," in all of its communiqués regarding an international conference, not being satisfied with the expression, "effective international conference."

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] What is your position on the start of a dialogue between the PLO and the United States?

[Habash] We consider it an important political achievement of the intifadah. In this regard, I am at pains to address some who believe that the concessions put forth by brother Yasir 'Arafat at the press conference in Geneva led to U.S. recognition of the PLO, and the start of the Palestinian-American dialogue. I reject this opinion entirely, and I am entirely convinced that the intifadah, and its local, Arab and international impact, are what forced the American administration to emerge from this bottleneck in which it was situated.

Schultz, during his numerous trips after the start of the intifadah, attempted to outflank the PLO, but failed miserably. When the American administration decided to prevent brother Yasir 'Arafat from addressing the UN at its New York headquarters, 154 states decided to transfer the meeting to Geneva, which constituted a significant slap against the US. Is there any greater degree of isolation?

The American administration had no choice but to acknowledge the reality of the PLO, and to start discussions with it. If I am not mistaken, brother Yasir 'Arafat possessed, after his press conference in Geneva, information which indicated that the American administration had decided to hold a dialogue with the PLO, regardless of whether that press conference took place or not.

Now then, it is useful for us to know that the goal of the American administration in this stage, beginning with the start of negotiations until the present, is a malicious goal aimed at extracting excessive concessions from the PLO leadership. It also aims to attempt to dissolve or weaken national unity, and at the same times, propose the Jordanian option as a solution to the Palestinian problem.

The continuation, radicalization and escalation of the intifadah, and the extension of its effects into the local, Arab and international spheres will guarantee for us that the American administration will be forced to accept American-PLO discussions under the heading of "the Palestinian state," and not "what the PLO possesses in the way of security information," or the like.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] It has been noted that the demand for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the occupied lands in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, and the placement of these lands under international supervision, does not enjoy much interest, even though this demand constitutes the slogan most

capable of mobilizing and rallying world public opinion regarding the conditions of the intifadah, because a legal mentality and enduring concepts have become rooted in the sensibility of world public opinion, more so than the labyrinths of political maneuvering. What is your appraisal and opinion regarding this notion?

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] I completely agree with the content of the question. We made this demand in the political communique issued by the last meeting of the PNC. Likewise, brother 'Arafat made this demand in his speech in Geneva. However, there is a shortcoming in this respect with regard to implementing this demand instead of just stating it. The reason for the shortcoming is that we are facing logic which maintains that the American administration will use its veto right in the Security Council against this demand; therefore, what value is there in making this demand in UN organizations?

I do not agree with this logic. We must make this demand time and time again if necessary, even if the only result is the disclosure of the true essence of the American position on this just demand understood by all. This is one aspect. Another is that this subject must be raised constantly, not only inside UN organizations, but also in all international, social and humanitarian organizations, as well as with the press and all communications media, in order to bring constant pressure to bear on the American administration and the Zionist entity.

[AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI] What is the extent of the danger posed by the offer of confederated union with Jordan, and the formation of a joint delegation to attend an international conference? What is your opinion on the formation of a unified Arab delegation?

[Habash] I expect that after a while, all pressures will be focused on the offer of a confederated union and the formation of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The American administration will promote this line, and Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and most of the Arab regimes—the extent and size of whose connections to American policy we know—will automatically adjust themselves to the American line. However, I hope that the concessions will not descend to this level. For all know that the infamous, buried Amman agreement was the main reason for the state of divisiveness experienced by the PLO following the PNC meeting which took place in Amman, and following the agreement of 11 February between brother Yasir 'Arafat and King Husayn.

At this political moment, I find it farfetched that the PLO leadership would risk making this dangerous kind of concession. If it does risk such a step, the national, democratic forces in the Palestinian arena, the unified national command in the interior, and the masses of our Palestinian people are able to thwart it.

Regarding a joint Arab delegation, the formation of such a delegation must be preceded by a final agreement on the part of the Arab parties composing this delegation regarding the topic of "nation and repatriation." Without this, the formation of such a delegation would result in the concentration of pressure on the PLO leadership to concede a state in favor of a confederation with Jordan before the establishment of a state.

Terms For International Conference, Direct Negotiations Discussed

44040381 Nicosia FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
16 Apr 89 pp 32-34

[Article by Sa'adah Sudah: "Dangerous Comparison Between International Conference and Direct Negotiations"]

[Text] The controversy over whether the international conference or direct negotiations are more beneficial is not some sort of political harassment but a sincere reflection of the Palestinian tendency toward peace. It is true that peace is concluded with enemies. But the Palestinian issue has Arab and international dimensions that must be taken into consideration in order that the peace may be actual peace.

Meron Benvenisti¹, an Israeli researcher, believes that "both the Palestinians and the Israelis have begun to deeply empathize with one another's identity. The 100-year war has motivated both of them to seek their identity, not only by learning who they are but also by learning in what ways their identities are indistinguishable. They are managing their dialogue with deeds and with the vocabulary of a special and distinctive language whose precise nuances only they, to the exclusion of all others, understand."

These "others" just about applies primarily and before anybody else to the United States which, despite its fundamental role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, does not fully understand the "special and distinctive language" with which the two sides are managing the conflict or, to be cautious, which the United States disregards. The U.S. tries to impose its own language on the Palestinian side in particular, even though we acknowledge the general improvement in its position—an improvement made evident in the second round of the U.S.-PLO dialogue and in the statements of the most prominent U.S. officials. The Palestinian and Israeli assessment of Washington's true current position toward the various aspects of the Palestinian issue is almost completely identical. In the words of Dr Nabil Haydari², a researcher at the PLO Studies Center, "fundamentally," this position "has not altered its adherence to the essence of the two Camp David accords in the face of a tactic which has, in the assessment of a number of observers, led Washington to try to 'internationalize' Camp David and to drop from it the characteristic of an 'independent U.S. deal' so that it may make up for an international conference, while keeping the Palestinian

national rights' knot pending and while linking the Palestinian political future to Jordan, without recognizing the PLO. The 'internationalization' of Camp David is considered an entire phase which was completed by George Shultz and handed over to James Baker, his successor. In any case, this phase constitutes the extension of the past into the present or, in other words, the starting point from which the U.S. secretary of state must begin in confronting the Soviet movement."

The Israeli assessment, as expressed by Amos Gilboa³, a former government adviser on Arab affairs, sees that "from the U.S. viewpoint, the Middle East problems are not urgent...the new administration's starting points are as follows:

"They will hold official dialogue with the PLO but will object to the PLO as an independent party on a political level equal in weight to Jordan, for example.

"They will not call for Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 borders but will support the principle of 'territories for peace.' (What the area of these territories is, what territories they are, and to whom they are to be delivered in return for peace are questions that are to be left to future negotiations).

"They are not very enthusiastic about 'holding an international conference,' and they consider direct negotiations the best means for enhancing the political process.

"The U.S. does not consider itself in the position of imposing a solution on Israel, especially on a united Israel that clings to its opinion.

"They consider the Camp David agreement (with some amendments compatible with the new circumstances introduced into it) the framework for the settlements.

"They do not think that the area's situation requires an immediate cure.

"They consider Israel a first class ally in all areas."

There is no doubt that the key to the excessive U.S. "judiciousness," which reaches the point of coldness, lies its position on the international conference in its capacity, from the Palestinian and regional viewpoint (excluding Israel) and the international viewpoint (excluding the United States), as the most suitable framework for moving the political process forward. It is not that the Palestinians are trying to push the five Security Council members to impose a solution on Israel or that the Palestinians are trying to gain strength in such a conference from the presence of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon on their side.

The fact is that the PLO's adherence to the international conference as a framework for a solution emanates from a complete vision of the intrinsic, regional and international conditions. Washington must not put itself in the

position of a party seeking to fragment this vision into conflicting elements if it truly wishes its dialogue with the PLO to be beneficial, because this dialogue is not based solely on ex-U.S. President Ronald Reagan's announcement of 15 February 1988 but also on the official Palestinian documents, especially the resolutions of the PNC's 19th session, Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's address to the UN General Assembly on 13 December 1988 and the statements he made in the press conference he held in Geneva on the following day. These (the address and the statements) rely fully on the PNC's documents and swerve from them not one iota.

Thus, it cannot be said that the elements of the "Palestinian peace offensive" are summed up in the statement that "it has accepted Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, has acknowledged Israel's right to existence and has renounced terrorism," as Reagan said in his announcement. From a much broader perspective, the PLO has, moreover, offered in this regard part of what the United States had considered throughout 14 years its conditions for dialogue with the PLO. Acceptance of the two abovementioned Security Council resolutions in the "political proclamation" issued by the PNC [Palestine National Council] came specifically within the following context: "The need to hold an effective international conference on the Middle East issue, whose crux is the Palestinian issue, under UN auspices and with the participation of the permanent UN Security Council members and of all the parties to the region's conflict, including the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, as an equal, considering that the conference is to be held on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and of guaranteeing the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights, especially their right to self-determination, in enactment of the principles and provisions of the UN charter... and in accordance with the UN resolutions on the Palestinian issue."

Relying on this clear provision, on the circumstances surrounding the Palestinian issue and on the issue's regional and international dimensions, it can be clearly concluded that the recognition of resolutions 242 and 338 is not tied only to the other UN resolutions on this issue and not conditional only upon guaranteeing the Palestinian people's legitimate national right. It is also, first and foremost, tied to and conditional upon holding the international conference concerning this region's issue, whose crux is the Palestinian issue.

The controversy over whether the international conference or direct negotiations are more beneficial in achieving a settlement to the area's problem is not irrelevant, not some sort of political harassment and certainly not an attempt to impose preconditions and is not even out of loyalty to certain international alliances or to pan-Arab commitments to other Arab countries. Rather, it is all this, in addition to being a sincere reflection of the Palestinian tendency for a peace based on a profound, penetrating, and complete concept of how to achieve the most comprehensive and fairest solution possible, not

just any solution. A framework accepted by a certain party to discuss and settle a certain issue reflects to a large degree this party's vision of the nature of the desired solution. It is no extra luxury that negotiators, before sitting face to face, begin with agreement, through indirect contacts [ittisalat janibiyah], on their venue, on the shape of the table around which they will sit, on the level and size of the negotiating delegations, on the manner in which their national flags will be placed, on the manner in which the sessions will be managed, and on the dates and agendas of the sessions.

Accordingly, the Palestinian determination to hold the international conference two main considerations:

First, a conference like this will necessarily find its legal and political reference in all the UN resolutions previously approved by all its participants. Partition resolution 181, for example, was approved by Israel the moment it was adopted. Israel founded its "state" on its basis, and it was accepted as a UN member on its basis. It was also approved by the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France and by the PLO recently. It will be approved by the Arab countries in the first summit convened by their kings and presidents.

The availability of such a legal and political reference for the framework of the proposed solution will make the discussions more beneficial and well-founded; will save a lot of time, maneuvering, and bargaining; and will establish the controls for all concerned, especially for those whose participation Israel fears, namely the Soviet Union, China, France and Britain.

Second, the Palestinians do not seek an independent deal with Israel, not because they fear it—peace is made with enemies, as Chairman 'Arafat reiterates—but because their issue has obvious Arab (let us say regional) dimensions. The refugee issue is the most obvious issue in this regard. Let us assume (just for the sake of discussion) that agreement is reached in direct negotiations on the repatriation of a certain percentage of these refugees and on resettling those who do not wish to return where they live currently. Then this would necessarily require the agreement of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Or is it that the Israelis think that the Palestinian negotiator will conclude with them a military agreement to invade these countries and force them to resettle their refugees!

The Palestinians, who are proud of themselves and of their long struggle, are distinguished by the virtue of humility. They have seen with their own eyes the dimensions of the Egyptian hardship resulting from the conclusion of an independent peace treaty with the enemy. This hardship has emanated from a total Arab isolation which has required 10 years, and more, to overcome. The Palestinians do not aspire to a ghetto isolated from its natural Arab environment which has only Israel's bosom to turn to, as in the popular proverb about "jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire." We

don't know what inducements will, in case of an independent Palestinian-Israeli deal, compel Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon to approve such a deal, when some of the territories of these countries continue to be occupied by Israel and when they have received no guarantees concerning the security of their existence.

As for the demand for direct negotiations which is raised by Israel and with which the United States concurs, it is likely, in case Israel clings to it, to foil the historic opportunity available for peace in this time period. Perhaps it is not even possible for this demand to be realized (regardless of its outcome) because it will immediately become bogged down in the old vicious circle—the circle of seeking a Palestinian negotiator to replace the PLO. The demand will also fail to meet what is minimally acceptable at the Palestinian level. That minimum can be formulated as follows: "a Palestinian state only, and all other conditions are subject to dialogue." Meanwhile, the ceiling of the direct negotiations, especially if the PLO is excluded from them, even in an initial phase, will continue to be governed by self-rule, to which no Palestinian agrees or will agree.

This decisive rejection must not be interpreted as plain obstinacy, because Benvenisti himself, not we, offers a more logical interpretation. He sees that the "Israeli initiatives represent no inducement to the local Palestinian leaders, because their response will mean their transformation into traitors, and rightly so. No Palestinian can violate the principle of the unity of the Palestinians living in the territories and the Palestinians in the diaspora or can fully disavow his legitimate leadership."

It is obvious that the U.S. administration is refraining from offering any specific commitments regarding the horizons of the settlement it favors and is inclined to disregard its past commitments. It has thus motivated Chairman 'Arafat to remind it within the context of his address to the United Nations that "it knows that the only birth certificate of the creation of the State of Israel is General Assembly resolution 181." This also motivated him to ask: "How does the U.S. administration explain its position which acknowledges and recognizes the half of this resolution which concerns Israel and which refuses the other half concerning the state of Palestine? Moreover, how does the U.S. administration explain its failure to adhere to the implementation of a resolution which it has repeatedly adopted in the past in your esteemed assembly, namely resolution 194 which provides for the right of the Palestinians to return to the homes and properties from which they had been expelled or to be compensated in case they do not wish to return?"

Relying on all these given facts, it can be said that direct negotiations amount to no more than getting a Palestinian negotiator and an Israeli negotiator together, with the former presenting his demands and the latter listening and then responding to state what he can approve, with modifications, and what he rejects decisively, without

any legal or political reference, without any U.S. commitment to a certain ceiling to be produced by the negotiations and without any attempt to pressure the Israeli side to move close to this ceiling.

Our touching on the required U.S. commitments does not mean that offering these commitments will open the door for the Palestinians to agree to "turn their back," to use Dr Haydari's phrase, on the international conference, which is Washington's position. Rather, such commitments are considered axiomatic for continued development of the U.S. dialogue with the PLO. The "political paper" presented by the Palestinian side in the second round of dialogue with the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia notes that the "effectiveness and increased influence of the U.S. role depend on a balanced position that is neither aligned with nor continually tied to the Israeli viewpoint. This requires serious progress toward acknowledging our people's right to self-determination and to establish the independent Palestinian state and recognition of the PLO as their sole representative."

The current U.S. balance which is established on negativism, not positivism, is not really balanced, because equating the henchman with the victim and making the same demands on both, as Baker has done in his proposal calling for de-escalating the intifadah [uprising] in return for reducing the level of the Israeli violence, is an approach based on nothing but a superficial and simplistic logic. Pursuing this approach will, practically and logically, lead to nothing other than restoring the conditions prevailing in the occupied state of Palestine prior to 1 December 1987 when there was no intifadah but struggle at a varying pace against the occupation—a pace practiced throughout the 20 years following the June 1967 war and the Israeli army's complete occupation of historical Palestine.

This analysis does not overlook the few positive points reflected in the latest U.S. positions, such as the statement in which Baker expressed the opinion that Israel might be compelled to talk to the PLO if its efforts to negotiate with Palestinians from the occupied territories fail. This is progress in the issue of Palestinian representation in the current peace process. But similar progress at the level of this process is vital for the process itself and for the most comprehensive and fairest solution possible. It is our wager that President Bush's current administration includes men with enough vision to believe in and to work according to the prediction of Richard Murphy, an former assistant U.S. secretary of state for Middle East affairs, who expressed on 1 March 1989 the opinion that the United States "will ultimately accept the international conference as a means to help hold direct talks" between the parties to the conflict.

Footnotes

1. From AL-HAYAT's (31 March 1989) translation of his article, entitled "The Following Morning," published in the JERUSALEM POST (22 February 1989).

2. SHU'UN FILASTINIYAH, No 193, April 1989.

3. Cited from AL-MILAFF's translation—No 60, March 1989—of his article, "Light at the End of the Region," published in MA'ARIV, 17 February 1989.

Fatah Rebel Leader Discusses Views on Palestinian Struggle

44040371 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic
24 Mar 89 pp 17, 20

[Interview with "Abu Musa" (Sa'id Muraghah) by AL-WATAN; date and place not specified; first three paragraphs are AL-WATAN introduction]

[Text] The Palestinian question is going through a distinct phase in its history, for the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are waging one of the largest successful political battles against the occupation, and the PLO is continuing its broad political attacks, relying on the accomplishments of the intifadah [Palestinian uprising] and exploiting the favorable international situation.

Under these circumstances, AL-WATAN had a heated telephone interview with Col Abu Musa, leader of the "opposition Fatah". The heat of the interview was not eased by a third party coming onto the line several times calling for an end to the call after it had gone on for a long time.

Through the questions that we directed at "Abu Musa" we tried to become acquainted with his political view of what is going on in the Palestinian arena, both inside and abroad, and to inquire into what he might do to deal with the great challenges that face the Palestinian people and which demand effective measures, and do not allow one to retreat or flee before them. The interview extended to include other issues. So what did Abu Musa say?

Military Operations and the Liberation of Palestine

[AL-WATAN] In connection with the military operation that took place recently, do you believe that military operations alone are enough to take back Palestine?

[Abu Musa] We are convinced that Palestine will not come back except through armed struggle, and by continuing the struggle with that entity. Palestine will not return through conferences or dialogues, whether bilateral, collective, international, or the like. We start out from our understanding of the nature of the Zionist enemy. This Zionist enemy has a hostile and colonial nature, and its program is subservient to the service of American imperialism. It is an entity that is unable to live peaceably in the region, and it cannot coexist. Its continued survival is based on the continuation of its hegemony and dominance over the region. We realize that this enemy has a program that has not yet been completed, for it wants hegemony over the Arab region and to control all its resources and to strike a blow against all its progressive and liberation forces. All this is

in the service of American imperialism, aimed at keeping the Arab region a backward region and a market in which to dump American production and a labor force in the service of imperialist capital embodied in the entity. A hostile entity like the Zionist entity will never have a program of peace, and thus everything that is going on now on the Palestinian scene in the way of taking concessional steps is tantamount to submitting papers without justification to this Zionist enemy. When the revolt broke out we engaged in educational campaigns to enlighten our masses, and we told them that our enemy is racist, colonial, and expansionist and wants hegemony.

The only way and the only solution is to perpetuate the struggle, and not just military operations. It is an ongoing struggle among us as an Arab nation, not just as Palestinians, with this entity and its extensions, and the operations at this stage are meant to get things moving and to force the struggle to continue.

Liberation of All Palestinian Soil

[AL-WATAN] We know that military operations always serve political action, and both of them serve the goal. What then is your goal—is it not the liberation of Palestine?

[Abu Musa] My goal is the liberation of all national Palestinian soil. As it stands now, the resolutions that were adopted in Algiers, which say that the political solution will be through an international conference, the political basis of which is Resolution 242—this resolution, my brother, does not yield a Palestinian nation nor does it offer a solution to the Palestinian question. The permanent, comprehensive, just solution about which they talk will not come about through the path that they are following. The just solution is that there be justice for those who have suffered oppression, and the Palestinian people who were forced to emigrate from their country in 1948 and whose country was seized will accept no less than a return to that country as a just and comprehensive solution. For the legitimate leader of that nation is implying to the Palestinian people that a part of the land of Palestine would be a permanent, comprehensive and just solution, but accepting that means acknowledging the existence and legitimacy of the Zionist entity.

[AL-WATAN] As I said in my second question, military operations serve political action. How can you engage in military operations without supporting them with political action?

[Abu Musa] I want to engage in political action that would lead to a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question. The PLO's program has laid down a solution, which is the establishment of a secular, democratic, Palestinian state in which all coexist on the land of Palestine.

[AL-WATAN] This statement of yours leaves the question unanswered. You have carried out military operations, but what have you put forward on the political scene to take advantage of these operations?

[Abu Musa] It is not necessary that all our operations and our struggle that has lasted for 25 years produce in the end political action like that which is happening these days. My political action is to continue to abide by the charter, the Palestine National Charter, which the Palestinian people established when the PLO proclaimed in 1964 that the Palestinian nation was Palestine with its geographic borders from the north, that is from al-Naqrurah to Rafah, and from the river to the sea. The solution is the establishment of a secular Palestinian state. I call for this solution, and I continue to adhere to this principle. I am not obliged to submit solutions. Who said that the oppressed should be the one to propose solutions, and that the one expelled from his country should be the one to propose solutions? As long as the enemy occupies the land and drives out the people, and we have not a foot of ground in our possession, how can I propose solutions to an enemy that occupied the land and drove out the people? Is it true that he would accept a compromise solution from me? And if he would allow me to set up a Palestinian state, why has he occupied Palestine, all of Palestine, and parts of Lebanon and Syria?

Dialogue With America

[AL-WATAN] While in Baghdad 'Arafat said about those who engaged in the latest commando operation that "if they intend to hamper me they are mistaken." Do you believe that the military operations that you are engaging in can stop the dialogue with America?

[Abu Musa] The operation will not stop the dialogue because it was not carried out for that purpose. The goal of our military operations against the enemy is not to serve a peripheral issue, which we believe has no life in the end, by which I mean the question of dialogue with America. We have a program of struggle on which we rely and in which we believe, and we are determined to carry on with it.

Operations From All Borders

[AL-WATAN] From your statement, we understand that you intend to carry out commando activity from all Arab borders without exception.

[Abu Musa] There are people who think that that was the first operation, and I have been asked by some of our brother journalists whether this was the first operation from Jordan. We will operate on all fronts and from any place from which Palestine can be reached. When circumstances enable us to enter Palestine by air we will not hesitate or delay. When I get the opportunity to operate from the Egyptian front I will not quit the Jordanian front. Rather I will operate from both fronts. We have

tried more than once, and we have organized more than one operation in the past through Jordan. This is a program we have, and it was not done on the spur of the moment, nor were operations carried out impetuously at the Jordanian front. It is an integrated program on all fronts in which we must have a role.

Operations in Support of the Intifadah

[AL-WATAN] Do you make a distinction between military operations and the intifadah?

[Abu Musa] No. They complement one another.

[AL-WATAN] Some consider the military operation that you carried out to be a move to thwart the intifadah and the PLO. What is your opinion?

[Abu Musa] No, I consider it to be support. How would we develop and give moral support and encouragement if we did not all participate in this activity which is directed against this occupying enemy? There are people, children, women, and old men throwing stones, without guns or bombs in their hands. When I get hold of a bomb from outside, I must contribute and carry out this role so as to lighten the pressure and oppression which are applied against the masses inside Palestine and give them moral support, and also so that the Palestinian people would not appear to be two peoples, a people that fights and a people that watches. No, we and our Palestinian people all of us wherever we are, we struggle. Some of us fight with stones, some with guns, some with the pen, and some by drawing cartoons.

The Intifadah and International Accord

[AL-WATAN] The popular intifadah within the occupied territory arose for a purpose, namely liberation. What must we do so that it will remain ongoing, soaring, growing? Then, do you not agree with me on the need to exploit it politically in light of the current atmosphere of international accord?

[Abu Musa] I do not start out from an atmosphere of international accord. I start from what I want first, where I am with respect to my cause. Then I look at all the positive Arab, regional, and international factors that would serve the cause that I am pursuing first of all. Exploitation is a word which I believe is not appropriate to the Palestinian question. We cannot exploit this intifadah, which is an expression of the legacy of the history of our struggle and of our Palestinian people which father inherited from grandfather. We must develop it, and we must know what we want of it. It has established many facts in the arena of the struggle.

This people rejects coexistence. Furthermore, do you not agree with me that the majority of those who confront this enemy morning and evening in our occupied territory are the people of the camps within the occupied nation? True, the towns are rebelling, and the villages

play a role, but do you not agree with me that the greatest part of this responsibility is borne by the people of the camps? Those people of the camps, from where did they come? Are they not people who were residents of the land occupied in 1948? True, they wish to lift the occupation from the West Bank through their intifadah, but each one also has the goal of returning to his home. You know how precious one's home is.

The West Bank is their homeland, and Gaza is their homeland, but Haifa and Jaffa are also their homeland. Are these young men rising up for a state on the West Bank or Gaza? That is, if there is a state. I believe there is nothing in the Zionist program, or the American program, or the program of many of the Arab states that can be called a Palestinian state.

Why the Haste?

[AL-WATAN] How long do you believe the intifadah can continue without us "serving"—so as not to say "exploiting"—it politically? And if there is a way, what is it, from your point of view?

[Abu Musa] I am confident that the intifadah will continue, and its duration is not limited to a year or two or three. It will continue as long as it is not struck from outside, on condition that we offer it a loaf of bread, at least.

[AL-WATAN] But how long...

[Abu Musa] Why the haste! The Crusaders occupied our country for 200 years, but in the end they left. We must pay the tax of the homeland in the thousands with the blood of martyrs so that it will not be recorded in our history that we by our own volition conceded that the enemy which came from around the world had a legitimate right to be in our Arab body, Palestine.

We Do Not Lose Anything

[AL-WATAN] Do you believe that this opportunity of an "atmosphere of international accord"—whose existence you cannot deny, because the signs of it do in fact exist—do you believe that an alternative to this atmosphere could be found in the foreseeable future were it to go away without us having taken advantage of it?

[Abu Musa] We have not lost anything besides occupied territory. Now there is more than one thing on our side: history, geography, the human depth. I would like to say to those who want to rush this issue that in 1948, 150,000 Palestinians remained in occupied Palestine, and now, 40 years later, there are around 800,000 Palestinians. It would not hurt us to wait patiently for another 40 years, on condition that during that time the struggle with the enemy continue so that we do not give him the chance to relax and build himself up. By simple calculation, we see that 150,000 became 800,000 in 40 years, so in the next 40 years, how many will that be?

[AL-WATAN] In light of the "complex" Arab situation, how will the intifadah be able to continue?

[Abu Musa] It is continuing. The PLO leadership now has the material capabilities, and it must push with all its material might to help those people within Palestine to enable them to continue to survive. Furthermore, I do not believe that the Arab situation will change much. Rather, the continuation and support of the intifadah must come from its national Palestinian leadership.

Relations With the Intifadah

[AL-WATAN] What is your relationship to the intifadah?

[Abu Musa] Our relationship to the intifadah is that of any organization within Palestine. Whoever says that he is the first or the last is, sad to say, deceiving himself and his people. We say that we are a part of this national, Palestinian reality, and we have a humble role. We do not claim to be the ones who initiated the intifadah or unleashed it, but our role, so we believe, was good, and we are satisfied with it. We place ourselves in the constant service of the intifadah. This intifadah is the revolution of a people involving all its groups, all its forces, and its history of struggle.

Tangibly

[AL-WATAN] You are not represented in the unified command. We would like to know your role in supporting the intifadah practically and tangibly.

[Abu Musa] We participate in our own way and with our own capacities. I do not wish to criticize this command inside Palestine or detract from its role. Rather I say that the local popular committees in the villages, streets, neighborhoods, and cities are what is driving the intifadah.

The Movement and the Unified Command

[AL-WATAN] You do not participate in the unified command, so how much contact do you have with the masses?

[Abu Musa] Is the unified command the only one that has contact with the masses? Does it in the end extend to all the forces existing there? We are in contact with our masses through internal declarations, political directives, and organizational work in the interior. We are not cut off from our masses. But in the end we say God bless everyone who fights on the home front, regardless of whether we are participants in the command that expresses the point of view of the current PLO or whether we are not. All the fighters inside Palestine, whether they are within the national action command, announced or unannounced, are in the unified command.

The Train Will Not Come!

[AL-WATAN] Do you not believe that the train of a solution is moving quickly, whereas you in the salvation front are moving extremely slowly?

[Abu Musa] No, I am not very afraid. That train does not have a station. It will continue to go around and not arrive at a station. It is a settlement train that does not have life or the possibility of arriving at that for which the Palestinian revolution arose, and for which the Palestinian revolution set out.

Thus it is a trap while it gets nowhere, and thus all who are on this train will bear a historical responsibility, a religious responsibility, and a responsibility to future generations, which will curse all who drive it.

I am sure that everything that the United States and the Zionist entity try to do now will be to take political positions that establish the legitimacy of the existence of Israel. The resolutions do not prohibit struggle with the enemy, neither the United Nations resolutions nor the Algiers resolutions, because there exist two incompatible things. There is an Arab nation that has its history and its goals of unity, liberation, and freedom from domination and hegemony of imperialism and colonialism. On the other hand there are powers gathered from around the world to be a vanguard in the service of imperialism. Thus the seeds of the struggle are there, and will not end with a resolution from here or from there.

[AL-WATAN] What is your current program? In order for you to be close to the masses, you must have a plan and a complete program of action. Frankly, the prevailing belief is that accusations and abuse against the PLO do not bring you very close to the masses, for you have accused the PLO leadership of betrayal more than once, though the PLO has not repudiated armed struggle. That is what is said on the street. It has repudiated terrorism, but not armed struggle, and there have begun to be operations from Fatah and other groups under PLO leadership. At the same time that those groups are carrying out military operations, they have a political plan. This plan has popular support and it has put Israel and America in a bind. The Palestinian masses believe this is part of the solution or of the sound course of the leadership, whereas politically you are stuck where you are and the train is moving quickly. Where are your contacts with friends, and what are you doing to remain among the allies?

[Abu Musa] I believe that the train that is setting out now does not have a station.

I Rescue the Will of the People

[AL-WATAN] Why is your military goal not "served" by political action through your contacts?

[Abu Musa] My political action is through my abiding by the Palestine National Charter, through which I abide by the decision of the people. For I am rescuing the will of the people, as it was when they resolved upon the national charter and laid down its fundamental articles and inalterable concepts.

Beginning of the Retreat

[AL-WATAN] You were in Fatah in 1974 when they set up the phased program, and you agreed to it.

[Abu Musa] That was the beginning of the retreat and abandonment of the National Charter. True, I was in the Fatah leadership, but the Fatah leadership knows that I did not approve of it.

But within the existing framework, at that stage we observed democracy and democratic centralism. But we believed at that stage that it would be possible to counter this program through dialogue within the establishments, until we came to the 1983 period, when establishments and frameworks were no longer able to stop this course, which began to touch inalterable national principles. In 1983 when we undertook to oppose this course we were calling for control over the general conference of the Fatah movement.

My Program is Fatah's Program

[AL-WATAN] What is your program now, now that you have broken away from Fatah to stop this course?

[Abu Musa] My program is that of the Fatah movement, which states in its seventh article that struggle against the Zionist enemy must continue, not only at our hands as a Palestinian people, but as the masses of our Arab nation, until we destroy this Zionist entity militarily, politically, culturally, and socially.

The International Conference

[AL-WATAN] You hear the news just as we do: the international conference is now on the way, the second session of the Palestinian-American dialogue has ended, and there are contacts and meetings being held concerning the international conference. If this conference is held, where will you be?

[Abu Musa] I will be in Palestinian territory, and I will continue the fight whether there is an international conference or not. I am absolutely certain of what I say through my understanding of what is going on.

The current international activity is tantamount to the extirpation of Palestinian principles and inalterable concepts.

The Soviets agree to a process of bilateral meeting or bilateral dialogue. In fact they want it in a more advanced form.

[AL-WATAN] Who is your ally now?

[Abu Musa] My friend is the Palestinian people.

[AL-WATAN] Besides the Palestinian people?

[Abu Musa] That is my capital, in addition to the Arab masses that believe in their right to exist, their right to live, and their right to triumph.

[AL-WATAN] Who are your friends among the states?

[Abu Musa] There are no problems between me and any state. I have not opened fire against any state, and there is no state opening fire against me.

The Soviet Ally

[AL-WATAN] You talk about Soviet policy as if it were the policy of the United States. We understand American policy and we understand Israeli policy, but it seems as if you do not want outside allies supporting you.

[Abu Musa] On the contrary, I do want an ally.

[AL-WATAN] Do you not believe that the Soviet Union is an ally of the Palestinians and their cause?

[Abu Musa] The Soviet Union has offered us a lot and it supports our positions, but an ally does not have to concur with its ally, otherwise you would become Soviet.

[AL-WATAN] But this is a great power. If this great power advises you to take this road and it has the capacity that would enable you to traverse it in safety, they why do you, or we, not do so?

[Abu Musa] I want to start from the will of my people first of all, and what our people want most of all. When the Soviet Union supports me, I welcome its support.

But I refuse to allow any ally to bargain with me over my nation.

[AL-WATAN] What have you done and what is your responsibility to protect the people who object? Will you protect them, or will you serve them only by carrying out military operations, for example?

[Abu Musa] The people must also pay the blood tax.

[AL-WATAN] But surely they also want someone to protect them? You do not take part in the national councils, nor in any Palestinian dialogue, and you do not offer any political program, even just an informative one. At least, we have not heard of a political program of yours. And military operations alone make the road to liberation very long. Even if we were for these operations, is that not a fact that we must acknowledge?

[Abu Musa] The road was long to begin with, and we will not present political programs like those that are being proposed now.

That is because there is no middle solution. Let us take as an example Egypt with its history and its human and geographic depth: it was not able to get Taba back until after 10 years had passed, even though Taba is a mere one kilometer. What has happened to Egypt now happened because it left the battlefield. That is the American program.

[AL-WATAN] When you embarked on your movement in '83, there was much rallying around you. Afterwards, secession from you occurred, so what do you intend to do? You say that the struggle is long. What can you do to keep this long, complicated struggle going, especially since you do not participate in the leadership of the intifadah or in any Palestinian or other dialogue to strengthen Palestinian national unity. How long will the Palestinian people endure patiently?

[Abu Musa] Neither the Palestinian nor the Arab people can bear much. As for the program which you insist on talking about, I tell you that I have a program, but I do not present a program every day. The Zionist program has been in existence since 1897, and nothing in it has changed. My program is that of the PLO, the National Charter. That is my program, and the program of the Fatah movement which came out of the fourth conference in 1980. When it changes, and the Palestinian people come to change the National Charter, then there will be a word for every occasion, as they say. As long as the charter exists and is resolved upon by the Palestinian people, no one has the right to change its articles, its inalterable concepts, and its points of departure. That is my program to the Palestinian people, because that is the program of the Palestinian people. It was on the basis of that program that I came to fight, not to set up a program for the people, for the people are the ones who set up the program. In light of that program I came to fight for the good of the people, for their will, and for the achievement of their goals.

[AL-WATAN] Does not this program need to be developed?

[Abu Musa] Development for the better and not backwards. Any program in the world must be developed and be given a push forward. Liberating part of the homeland to liberate the rest is phased action, in the political language of the revolution. Phased action is that at first we say the secular, democratic, Palestinian state, then we say in the West Bank. I am pained, and I say that I am afraid that this road will lead in the end to functional division.

[AL-WATAN] What have you done to develop it for the better?

[Abu Musa] I do not claim to be the first or the last. I am part of this Palestinian reality and of the Arab reality. I fight along with others, and though there may be at this stage forces that have distanced themselves from the goals and principles, I believe that that is not the end of road or the end of the world.

Lebanon Battlefield

[AL-WATAN] How do you view the situation in Lebanon?

[Abu Musa] The situation in Lebanon is a battlefield, and unfortunately the way in which the crisis is being treated will not bring about results, because while Lebanon is dealt with as sects, it has its nationalist and political powers through which the solution must come. For example, Walid Junblat cannot be made a part of the Druze sect, while Khawlah Arslan is made another part of it. Walid Junblatt sees himself as bigger than all of Lebanon, and he is not only a Druze leader but a nationalist one. The same goes for Nabih Birri, who sees himself as half the world.

We hope that the six-member committee will find a way within the sectarian framework to lessen the pain of the Lebanese people, for this people has had enough suffering, and we believe that Michel 'Awn's carnage has taken things back to zero.

'Awn and the Maronite State

[AL-WATAN] With regard to the situation in Lebanon, it is said that it is considered that by their very existence, the latest massacres perpetrated by 'Awn's army are the beginning of the solution.

[Abu Musa] That is something that is always said whenever a battle escalates. They say that this is the beginning of the solution, but that is a long walk that began in 1975. But when General Michel 'Awn declares a war of liberation and tries to expel Syria from Lebanon by force, I do not believe that he wants a solution, rather he wants a Maronite political state, which would not be able to survive after 14 years of struggle, bloodshed, and martyrs.

The Case of Birri, and Hizballah

[AL-WATAN] Who is your ally in Lebanon?

[Abu Musa] All the nationalist Lebanese forces, from the Progressive Socialist Party to the Lebanese Communist Party, the Arab Ba'th Party Organization, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party with its two parts, emergency and the Supreme Council, and all Lebanese nationalists.

[AL-WATAN] Nabih Birri?

[Abu Musa] Nabih Birri is not an organization, he represents overlapping, popular groups, for he does not have a party or an organization. He has scattered, overlapping groups, penetrated by Mosad and going in all directions. Yet at the same time he has nationalist, fighting groups, but he cannot be taken as an ally in the sense of an organization.

[AL-WATAN] What is your position towards the Lebanese Hizballah?

[Abu Musa] There is not a strong relationship between us and the Hizballah, but we are not hostile to it. However, they follow a religious course, and we are not able to adopt such an issue at this stage because we are a national liberation movement, but the Hizballah wants to be religious ideology, and we believe that this ideology does not serve national Palestinian action.

Israeli Aggression Is Coming

[AL-WATAN] Do you share the view which says that there might soon be an Arab-Israeli war?

[Abu Musa] It being an enemy, we must not dismiss such an issue, because this enemy is aggressive. If we reckoned that this entity would not launch an aggression, we would be deceiving ourselves, and it would be as if we were denying our existence to begin with. Experience has taught us that this entity can export its crises abroad, so in view of the given situation going on now within the intifadah, as well as the international complexities, the possibility of hostility, especially against Syria, exists, and could occur at any moment.

Islamic-Christian Relations in Bethlehem Examined

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[Article by Avino'am Bar-Yosef]

[Text] Not far from Bethlehem's printing house, the site where reservist Gadi Amzaleg from Petah Tiqwa was stabbed last week, one street corner displayed in green the motto of Hamas (the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance Movement in the territories): "From Kabul to Palestine! After we have thrown out the infidels from there we will eliminate them from here and will take over everything in between!"

Bethlehem, which for close to 2,000 years has been identified with Christianity, has lost its Christian majority. According to military government statistics the town's population is 30,000, not including the refugee camps. At least half of that population is Muslim. The three adjoining refugee camps (al-Duhayshah, 'Ayidah, and al-'Azzah, which is located in the very heart of the city) are exclusively Muslim and count about 12,500 people.

Last week Muslim Brothers were crowing in the streets about the six seats that their sister organization had won in Nazareth. The victories won in Umm-al-Fahm and Kafr Qasim, and the rest of the gains of the Islamic movement in Israel in local elections were not even mentioned.

The fact that the house of Rami Hirmas, the murder suspect, was boarded up, did not surprise his Christian neighbors. The Bethlehem University student did not conceal his adherence to the Muslim Brothers and was active in the Christian town on behalf of the Islamic movement that has won support there, too. His uncle was recently arrested together with other Hamas leaders in the area, and his entire family supports the Muslim Brothers.

The Christians were, however, surprised and even frightened by this dedication and by the fact that a 22-year-old man, who grew up with Christian children, was willing to sacrifice himself in order to kill an Israeli soldier. They fear that one of these days the Muslim fervor may change direction and be vented on the Christian minority, which is the weakest factor in the area.

On Sunday morning Hirmas left the neighboring bakery carrying a parcel: "Gadi Amzaleg spotted him out of the corner of his eye," one of the patrol members who helped overpower the killer told the defense minister this week. "He commanded him to stop, and then, all of a sudden, I saw them embrace. Gadi was trying to shake him off while the attacker was pulling him to himself. I didn't understand what was happening until I was quite close and could see the glint of the knife.

"I had a rubber bullet in my gun and fired it in his back. I was afraid that I might hurt Gadi if I aimed at the face. In the meantime, two other soldiers realized what was happening and fired at the attacker, and that is how further injuries were avoided."

Arriving on a visit this week, Minister Yitzhaq Rabin found in Bethlehem a sad city. While he was being briefed by the military authorities on recent developments and on preparations to replace some of the IDF [Israel Defense Force] troops by border police, the printing house crossing was closed off.

The weather was stormy and it was very cold. The traffic was thin. A large number of soldiers had been brought in for greater security. The owners of the empty stores were asked to delay closing in case the minister wanted to talk to them.

"They did not tell us the reason for the delay," said the owner of a women's clothing store. "We wanted to leave. As it is, no one was coming to buy anything. The local councils request us to close shop and the soldiers order us to open. Each side has its own threats. Already a year has passed since we have found ourselves between a rock and a hard place."

Empty shelves testify to the crisis through which the city is going. In the store windows that had been carefully arranged before the intifadah [uprising] cheap house dresses, cotton blouses, and women's underwear have replaced the evening gowns and silk tops.

The streets of the city that in the past was known as "Jerusalem's shopping mall" have become stone traps. Israeli shoppers are afraid to come any more and local consumption has dropped. The restaurants are empty. Many liquor, car accessories, fashion, and shoe stores and the popular El Mondo pizzeria have closed down.

One Christian merchant who is still in business complained that in the past 10 days he opened up for only 6 hours. In accordance with Decree No 35, there were 3 days of general strike, which was extended in the wake of the death of a local resident who was killed in a clash with the IDF.

On 2 other days the city center was visited by the tax representatives of the authorities and everyone hastened to close up and go home. On Sunday was the attack on Gadi Amzaleg, and once again the city was shut down.

The defense minister was delayed at the government center, and during that time the soldiers spotted several slogans that had not been properly erased. They requested the owner of the closest grocery store to spray paint over the nationalist and Islamic graffiti. The soldiers addressed him in strong, albeit polite terms.

"Now the soldiers are leaving and the border troops are coming. That may well cut down the number of injured, but it will certainly increase the humiliation and hatred," the man said.

He recalled that at the beginning of the intifadah, a border police soldier in Balatah dropped his trousers in order to disperse a demonstration of women coming out of the mosque. Word of the incident spread like fire in a dry field and caused unrest in the territories.

A passer-by, who happened to be a leftist from Nazareth popular with the leading activists in the territories and close to them, joined the discussion. He told us that before the elections for the Knesset he was stopped at a border police roadblock and asked to show his identification:

"One of the men realized that I was an Israeli Arab and contemptuously asked for whom I was voting. I told him that I had a dilemma ever since Kahane was banned. The policeman, a Druze from one of the villages in the Galilee, left me alone, maybe he thought I was some kind of thug or the son of some big family from Nazareth."

This week one of the East Jerusalem press editors found himself in a similar incident near Bethlehem. A border police unit signaled the taxi in which he was going to

Hebron to stop. The policeman collected the identity cards and when he was through checking them he tossed them on the floor so that everyone had to bend down before him.

Then he lifted the loudspeaker in his hand, stuck it against the ear of one child who was in the taxi and asked him when he had last been throwing stones.

"That's worse than having people killed," said the journalist. "You should have seen the looks in the taxi after the incident."

The uprising headquarters this week had to wrestle with the mounting tension among the population, who is requesting real gains and who fears internal dissent. The idea of calling more strikes was abandoned.

The most recent proclamation, known as the "Karamah proclamation," urged the local councils to refrain from calling general strikes in the wake of the death of demonstrators.

The leadership of the uprising does not deal with Bethlehem's fears of the increased power of the Islamic current. The atmosphere is too charged and the clashes between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon do not contribute to calming the spirits.

In the meantime the Christians do all they can to bolster nationalist Palestinian factors and to be integrated in local leadership bodies, in the hope that all will help contain the spread of fundamentalism. The best example is Bethlehem's neighbor Bayt Tzur, which has become a Palestinian nationalist stronghold despite the fact that the Christians are still in the majority there, making up two-thirds of the population.

The fact that they are praised in almost every proclamation does not allay the fears of the Christians. They fear that the fundamentalist upheaval in Israel and the strengthening of the Islamic current in Gaza will be followed by a similar phenomenon in the territories. They warn against a pact between the authorities and the Muslim Brothers, who in their view are given a conciliatory treatment in order to weaken PLO support.

In private conversations the Christians are willing to admit that one of the reasons that PLO supporters rejected Yitzhaq Rabin's plan stemmed from the fear of elections in which Hamas may claim great gains.

Bethlehem is still treading carefully. Despite the tension, by the middle of the week the Nativity Church square was filled with pilgrims. Some 14 tourist buses were parked there at lunch time. In the past they contributed considerably to the city's economic prosperity. On the day in question, at lunch time not even one store was open.

Recently a tall fence was erected around the policy building that overlooks the square to protect it from stones and incendiary bombs. Attacks on it are staged mainly by young men when the faithful come out of the mosques. The mosques are increasingly fuller.

The results of the elections in Nazareth are a warning light for the Christians of Bethlehem. Mayor Ilyas Furayj, too, knows that if there should be free elections in the territories, his achievements and his international recognition will not be of help. The Christian city that every Christmas appears on television screens in millions of homes for the traditional mass will fall into the hands of a Muslim candidate running for mayor.

ALGERIA

Labor Minister Affirms Support for Tradesmen's Union

45190066d Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
5 Apr 89 p 6

[APS article by H.N.: "Support for Reforms"]

[Text] The sessions of the Second Congress of the General Union of Algerian Small Merchants and Craftsman (UGPCAA), which began at the Palace of Nations (Club des Pins) on Sunday morning, continued through their second consecutive day on Monday.

The morning session was taken up by a long discussion between the members of the Union (nearly 300) and Minister of Labor, Employment, and Social Affairs Mohamed Nabi and Secretary of State for Arts and Crafts Lakhdar Bayou.

The debate concerned the problems being experienced in this sector, such as bureaucracy, difficulties in supply, transportation (above all in the southern part of the country), shortages, and also taxes.

Minister Mohamed Nabi, for his part, emphasized the application of the social action program, the struggle against bureaucracy, and the adaptation of the texts to the current situation in the UGPCAA.

Minister Nabi also spoke of the problem of CNASAT [expansion unknown] and the National Pension Commission (CNR) registration cards for the members of the Union, noting his collaboration with the Union with regard to the appeals commission.

The minister of labor, employment, and social affairs also raised the problem of communicating information between the administration and the merchants.

In this connection, Minister Nabi emphasized to the UGPCAA that a guide to the rights and obligations of merchants and craftsmen in connection with the pension and insurance funds will be published this coming September.

The secretary of state for arts and crafts, for his part, stressed the importance of the crafts sector in the development of new jobs for young people, while at the same time indicating his willingness to implement the program of action proposed by the UGPCAA.

And, finally, he proposed that seminars with an arts and crafts orientation be organized in the governorates in the near future.

Minister of Commerce Mourad Medelci, for his part, delivered an address in which he mentioned the main aspects of the unfavorable international economic situation and its many negative implications for the economies of the developing countries, including Algeria. He took this opportunity to describe the leading aspects of the government program, stressing that it is a part of a veritable national strategy designed to respond to the effects of this situation. Its purpose is a general relaunching of the economy and adequate coverage of the basic needs of the people.

In a second portion of his address, the minister provided an explanation of the actions and measures undertaken or in progress pertaining directly to the concerns of the merchants and craftsmen.

For example, he went into considerable detail on the subject of supplying the national market with widely consumed products that are distributed in large part through the merchants.

The State Effort

In this connection, the minister of commerce made a point of explaining useful details to those present about the substantial effort the state is making to normalize the people's supply of certain imported products. These are items on which the foreign market prices have undergone major structural increases not reflected in domestic prices because of the government decision to freeze price levels in order to safeguard and protect the citizens' purchasing power.

Minister Medelci noted, moreover, that the establishment of a secretariat of state for arts and crafts bears witness to the government interest in the rapid recovery of this sector, which cannot fail to have a positive impact on the creation of jobs, the improvement of national production, and its promotion on foreign markets, as well as the development and flourishing of the national and cultural heritage.

This new government structure, the minister went on to say, has already ensured the inauguration, beginning in 1989, of a specific program of equipment, tools, and raw materials destined exclusively for craftsmen in the various sectors of activity.

In the course of his address, the minister also noted the mechanisms put in place in the commercial sector to organize and increase dialogue and agreement with all of the organizations and associations representing groups of workers, fellaheen, merchants, craftsmen, and consumers. This dialogue and agreement will pertain to a complex of questions on the organization of the commercial function and the operation and mastery of the domestic market for all sensitive products and those widely consumed.

Within the context of the discussion initiated with those attending the congress, the minister provided explanations about the methods of struggle being used against dishonest trade practices.

Consumer Protection

In this connection, he described, among other things, the contents of the main provisions of the recently promulgated law pertaining to consumer protection. He also discussed other suggestions, especially those pertaining to honesty with regard to control actions. He assured those present that they will be analyzed and dealt with in the draft law on prices on which the government is working.

Finally, Minister Medelci emphasized the need to adapt the trade system, on the basis of the content of the new constitutional provisions, and he took this opportunity to ask all of those participating in the congress to make all the necessary suggestions within this context.

Regional Wholesale Markets

The closing session was devoted to approval of the reports of the six commissions—on finance, election validation, internal regulations and bylaws of the UGPCAA, candidacy, general policy, and the future program of action of the UGPCAA.

With regard to the program of action, it should be noted that the Union approved the main guidelines for future action and made a commitment to pursue them for the next 4 years.

In this connection, the Union undertakes to strengthen its ranks by expanding its base and seeing to staffing its components and raising their consciousness, in accordance with its bylaws, as well as strengthening the base level structures by establishing and organizing vocational sections on the communal and governorate levels.

Moreover, the members of the Union approved efforts in the training and education sectors, as well as publication of a national periodical and the organization of seminars, discussions, and lectures on the local, regional, and national levels.

It was also agreed to publicize the real situation in the world of commerce on the vocational, relationship, and legal levels through the media, and to hold meetings and roundtables for vocational groups.

With regard to the supply issue—distribution, marketing, and prices—the Union will undertake to identify the weak points in the supply system, to inform the parties involved, and to work with them within the framework of the ad hoc commission.

The Union also undertakes to supply craftsmen providing professional services with products, raw materials, replacement parts, and working tools.

In connection with the battle against stockpiling, processing, transportation, and distribution, the Union is prepared to aid the enterprises and producers involved with supply in the organization and mastery of distribution.

Also, the UGPCAA will collaborate with the Ministry of Commerce to eliminate the use of buyers' cards, and it will participate in planning and studying the needs of each governorate and region, pursuant to the request of the consumers, including the governorates with a tourist potential.

The need to create and broaden the distribution of wholesale markets for fruits and vegetables on the regional and governorate levels was also stressed.

The Reforms in Progress

With regard to the development of commercial and craft activities, the Union agreed to integrate industrial activity in all its forms, to encourage all activities tending to regulate commercial and craft practice, by urging the services involved to publish price lists, and to promote arts and crafts, by providing the sector with broad publicity through exhibits, training, and technical aid.

The UGPCAA will also participate in the drafting of laws and regulations pertaining to the exercise of trade and craft and vocational activities, and to providing access to bank credit for the establishment and development of commercial and banking activities.

The improvement of legal working conditions and the social status of merchants and craftsmen is a continuing concern of the Union.

Within this context, it will work to improve the social security contribution schedules through a revision of rates, CNASAT and National Pension Fund registration cards, and pension and old-age compensation rates; and establishment of a mutual insurance company for merchants, craftsmen, and fishermen.

With regard to Union representation in the political and economic sectors, the organization will undertake to strengthen unifying actions among the merchants, craftsmen, fishermen, and service personnel in the Maghreb in order to ensure economic complementarity and consciousness raising for the bodies in the governorates with tourist sites, and within the framework of the law, to facilitate the participation of emigrants in the development of this sector.

Following the election of the secretary general of the UGPCAA, the session ended with a reading of the general political motion, in which the participants in the congress voiced their support of the economic and political reforms, while emphasizing the need for national unity.

They also hailed the efforts Algeria has made to ensure peace and security throughout the world.

Similarly, they hailed the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union.

The participants voiced their satisfaction with the opening up of the national market to the private sector so as to allow it to develop domestic production.

Influence of Fundamentalism in Education Analyzed

45190076 Algiers *REVOLUTION AFRICAINE* in French 28 Apr 89 pp 34-37

[Article by Keltoum Staali]

[Text] "If you will not be quiet, I will make you sit by a girl!" While this supreme threat is hardly pedagogically advisable, it at least has the advantage of converting the most remorseless whisperers into mutes.

Teachers do not hesitate to use this threat when they feel the need. It is a method that seems to produce satisfactory results. All the teachers will tell you that when one wants quiet in a classroom, the method is simple. Put a girl beside each boy, and the deed is done. Laughable as it may seem, this practice serves as evidence of an uneasy situation. Coeducation, although this may be a paradox, does not succeed of itself, first and foremost, for the students. Spontaneously, they have reestablished the traditional separation in the classroom—girls on one side, boys on the other. To violate as traditional a custom as this is scandalous, particularly in the eyes of the boys, who feel that they lose face when they sit beside a girl. Some, arguing that they must say their prayers, plead with the teacher to spare them an "impure" environment, by which they mean a girl nearby.

In fact, almost all of the arguments against coeducation have their source in Islam, or a particular interpretation of it. They say that sitting beside a girl is "haram." In the best of cases, if the students agree, despite their mortification, to intermingled classes, tradition takes over again

outside the school. Beyond its walls, the girls and the boys avoid each other conscientiously. Violation of the social conventions arouses suspicion in a society jealous of its taboos. If a boy and a girl sit down together on a bench to talk, they will inevitably draw "disapproving glances from honest passersby."

Within the schools, the intermingling of the sexes disturbs the boys more than the girls, who show less reticence and who find a means of compromise by wearing the "hidjab." This is a custom, moreover, which has been on the rise recently, for various reasons—religious conviction, family pressure, convenience, mimicry. Sometimes, and this is more serious, the girls come under direct pressure from certain teachers who abuse their authority by urging them to "wear the veil." The wearing of the "hidjab" creates a series of problems, moreover. It makes any athletic activity impossible, standing instead of an excuse. And worse, the girls are prevented from hearing by the "tchador." The teacher must repeat or shout to make them understand. The attitude of some of the teachers, who confuse the mosque with the school, should be emphasized. There is an ethical problem here. Sometimes a distortion of the teaching function for doubtful purposes can be observed.

In some cases a class in history or geography is turned into a religious sermon. M. S., a teacher in Khemis El Khechna, does not mince words. "Khemis EL Khechna is 30 km from Algiers, but it is also 30 centuries away." Day after day we are seeing the mosque take the place of the school, and vice versa. Any teacher can appoint himself an imam overnight. The classrooms are becoming forums in that religion is being used for political purposes. An English teacher was singled out in a sermon at the mosque because she had interspersed the girls and boys in order to reestablish calm in the classroom.

The imam castigated the teacher in his sermon on Friday and urged the students to rebel. He also criticized the content of certain lessons. "The mosque should not have to manage the schools." This revival of religious fervor in the educational sector is accompanied by inquisitorial attitudes that find intolerance a useful tool. And so we are seeing a reversal of the values, resulting in some indicative situations. For example, some students have become inquisitors, demanding that a woman teacher wear the "hidjab" if she does not want to see her classroom empty.

A sign of the times. The teacher has not only lost the privileged place he enjoyed in the popular view, but has in addition become a symbol of social failure. In short, an example of what not to imitate. That teachers are mistrusted and asked to account for themselves—this is what is most troubling.

The increase in the number of women in this profession doubtless has something to do with its loss of prestige. Female teachers are the victims of repeated attacks by small groups of fundamentalist students who turn

against those who do not wear the "hidjab." One of these teachers found herself being questioned by a student. "Do you know the five pillars of Islam?" And he added: "If you are truly a Muslim, then recite the chahada." Sometimes this attitude becomes violent, pure and simple. One woman teacher wanted to organize an exhibit on 8 March. "This is a Jewish holiday," her students said, and her exhibit was torn down. The boys in her classroom walked out and declared a strike, demanding that she be suspended. When she attempted to leave the school, they threw stones at her. This happened in Zeralda. "They denounced me publicly, and none of my colleagues or the union supported me. Later I organized a roundtable discussion on the family code. The next day, the students informed me that the FM group in my class had threatened to beat me up. Today I am afraid when I go to school. I no longer feel safe."

M. S. tried to talk to the students, telling them by way of example about the pilgrimage to Mecca, which men and women make together. This precisely is an anomaly, they felt. "There should be one pilgrimage for women and another for men."

A sixth-form science student, when asked about coeducation, stated categorically that "coeducation is like putting matches together with gasoline." A charming parable. Another stated sententiously that he was preparing for "youm el djihad," nothing less. Many of the students quote Bouali, and write "Bouali lives" on the blackboard.

The teachers in El-Harrach have reported similar incidents. One day a student tried to strike his teacher. By way of justification, he said that "in any case, she is only a woman." For a long time now, Nadia has been accustomed to seeing "please wear the hidjab" written on her blackboard. Similarly astonishing reports come from the teachers at the Okba High School in Bab El Oued. It is not unusual for students to leave the classroom without a word when the lesson displeases them.

During an explanation of the status of women, for example, they did not leave, but sent eggs flying through the air at the blackboard. Boys refuse to look at their teacher if she is female. Farid, a French teacher, asked the mother of a student he had punished for bad conduct to come to the school. The mother arrived and was shown into the vice principal's office. Then the student appeared and insisted on remaining for the interview, because "honor" would not allow him to leave his mother alone with foreigners.

Many teachers complain of a phenomenon that is taking on worrisome proportions. It is the distribution of cassettes, sometimes provided by colleagues, within the schools. They generally contain sermons by Egyptian imams explaining the need for women to wear the "hidjab" and describing the tortures that await infidels.

The lack of cultural and scientific activities favors the development of fundamentalist and fanatic arguments, which, fortunately, have not affected all of the students. Nonetheless, those who escape this influence are isolated, shunned, and mocked.

It is generally believed that the most fanatic students are very often the least capable. They refuse to study art and music because they were warned against these subjects at the mosque. They go to drawing class only for calligraphy. The rest comes under the heading "haram." Those among the teachers who are creative in proposing cultural activities come up against the administrators' refusal to give permission, if not the students' condemnation. Miss B., a teacher of French, wanted to sponsor a lecture in connection with Arbor Day. The administration would not approve it. However, it was not a matter of undermining ecology. The teacher had tried to get her class to study the Brel text of "Les Marquises," the most "neutral" she could find. She had even brought her tape recorder to play the cassette for the students. They left the classroom, because this music is "haram," Brel is a Frenchman, etc. "I felt like a fool with my tape recorder," she recounted in a pathetic tone.

M. C. wanted to show the film "Zionism in the Court of History" because, he said, "The students are very aware of the Palestinian issue." The administration would not give its approval. For the teachers, their work has become a veritable battlefield. They must be careful what they do and always on the alert, fearful of saying something that will offend the students.

Farid gave his students a question as a composition subject. "What are your favorite television programs?" One student wrote on his paper "I do not watch television because it is haram." The physics teacher also has his work cut out for him, with students who no longer even believe in science. During an explanation of the theory of gravity, the students protested, saying "objects fall thanks to the will of God." There is no end to the list of such astounding examples, which bear witness to a resurgence of irrationality, linked with a spreading religious fervor. And coeducation, or rather the issue of women, is at the heart of these contradictions. All of these manifestations claiming justification in Islam are focused on one single object—womanhood. The finger is pointed at women, who personify evil, as the cause of all social ills. The students at the Emir Abdelkader High School will swear to you that since coeducation was

introduced, the rate of failures on the baccalaureate examinations has gone up. For them, one thing is certain. Woman's place is in the home.

From the kindergartens to the universities, coeducation is gradually being extended throughout the educational system. While it does not really pose a problem in the kindergartens, in the grammar schools, high schools, and universities, on the other hand, women are targets for the fanatics who want to send them back to their homes. Recently the University of Annaba was the scene of serious clashes on the issue of coeducation, which fundamentalist groups want banned. During the organization of the Algerian Student Union branch at the University of Caroubier in Algiers, a woman student was rejected because she was not wearing the "hidjab."

In the rare coeducational university residential complexes, the same type of problem occurs. In every case, it is religious arguments that are invoked. In fact, rather than arguments, it is a question above all of judgments against which there is no appeal. The attitudes on the mixing of the sexes reveal a resurgence of obscurantism, which was opposed in the past by the ulemas. Educational establishments are becoming annexes to the mosques, and education is being supervised and corrected by the imams. Girls are being insulted and attacked in the name of Islam.

"And yet, Mrs S. says, "The intermingling of the sexes is the only way women can be rescued from this exclusion that consists of reducing them to sex objects. Students must learn to coexist within an educational framework, in order to interweave among themselves the bonds of comradeship, healthy competition, and respect. In this way, women will cease to be sexual objects in the eyes of the males, and will become full-fledged persons who think, who reflect, who create. New relationships will thus be born between the man and the woman of tomorrow."

Women are a real key issue in a changing society, and their status reflects the social and cultural level of a country. It is not without reason that Ben Badis said that "to educate a man is to educate an individual. To educate a woman is to educate a people." Locking women up, excluding women, means condemning our country to social, economic, and cultural stagnation. It means continuing forever in a state of underdevelopment. And the issue now is advancement.

Some Figures

Governorate	Number of First and Second Cycle Schools	Noncoeducational Schools
Algiers	438	1
Oran	305	1
Constantine	212	0
Tamanrasset	69	1
El-Oued	170	0
Governorate	Number of Third Cycle Schools	Noncoeducational Schools
Algiers	154	0
Oran	69	0
Constantine	69	1
Tamanrasset	10	0
El-Oued	41	0
Governorate	Number of Secondary Schools	Noncoeducational Schools
Algiers	58	7
Oran	25	0
Constantine	23	0
Tamanrasset	3	0
El-Oued	13	0
	Percentage of Female Students	In Algiers
	Nationwide	
Primary	41%	81%
Middle	43%	69%
Secondary	29%	58%

Elimination of Black-Market Role Discussed

45190075 Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
20-26 Apr 89 p 15

[Article by Abdelkader Hammouche: "Black Market: Wrong Alternatives"; first paragraph is ALGERIE ACTUALITE introduction]

[Text] The solution to the ills of the Algerian economy cannot be sought in the performances of a structured economy.

"Is the black market a regulating factor in the national economy?" The three officials of this ministry of whom we asked the question pondered it for quite a few minutes before answering. "As an official," one of them said, "I condemn and oppose the unofficial market. But I admit, as an individual, that I resort to it often." Millions of Algerians, men and women, live with this contradiction. "When your washing machine isn't working, your wife is constantly after you to repair it, and you can't find the spare part you're looking for on the official market, how would you not bless the black market, even if your pocketbook is hard hit in the process?"

So, is the black market a safety valve that enables us to prevent rancors from ending in social explosions? "First of all, we must make a distinction between the black market, which involves products manufactured locally

or imported by the state, and the market that involves nonexistent goods," this CENEAP [expansion unknown] economist insisted on making it clear. "In the first case, we are in the presence of a phenomenon of parasitism, speculation that it is imperative for us to bluntly combat. As for the second, because it comes into being to compensate for a national production that is nonexistent or insufficiently developed, it may appear to be a regulating or complementary factor." The investigator used the cautious words "may appear to be." For it is true that, while in the second case the black market does not involve an imbalance—since the goods are neither produced locally nor imported by the state—it nevertheless constitutes a disturbing factor if one reasons in terms of price, purchasing power; the very existence of this market is a major obstacle to raising citizens' standard of living. Furthermore, the first consequence of the violent fluctuations in price introduced by this market is the dinar's loss of purchasing power.

"The black market may appear to be a regulating factor from the social point of view," Miss Ferkhi, an economist, felt, "in terms of opportunities, in terms of possibilities of gaining access to employment, as precarious as this may be, since we note that the participants in this market are especially young people who have dropped out of school or jobless individuals of all ages who cannot find work on the job market when they need it. Moreover, this black market offers salaried workers in a

public or private company a chance to improve their purchasing power. From this point of view, we have a tendency to think of the black market as a regulator of the economy, in the sense that it is an empirical response to the profound dysfunctions of the national economy."

As for the state, since the economic crisis began to worsen—that is, since 1986—it has let it happen because it could not assume responsibility for all of the society's needs. The defaulting state has therefore let private initiative do the job for it. The result: The black market has assumed such proportions that it today constitutes a serious threat to the production sector, be it public or private. "The shortcomings of our economy," Miss Kherfi felt, "are structural, not dependent on the situation of the moment, hence the complexity and the danger of this black market. If we do not positively resolve the production sector's real problems, the black market will assume greater proportions, introducing consequences we cannot imagine at the present time."

As of now, it is clear that the black market cannot constitute a valid alternative. In time, the so-called "black" market is destined to disappear. The solution to the troubles the Algerian economy is afflicted with cannot be sought in the performances of a structured economy. Experience has shown that it is the official economy that has created a massive number of jobs and has generated certain productivities.

But can we effectively combat this black market? "The big black market," Mr Chelgham, a CENEAP investigator, noted, "Is a market whose existence is little or not at all suspected, one that 'deals in' production consumer goods (cement, equipment, etc.); it is there that the big transactions take place, there that this market is flourishing. We must not aim for the wrong target: The little merchant who resells Marlboros is not the adversary we are concerned with."

Now, it is notorious that this organized market is the result of social alliances. Consequently, the problem is assignable to the political sphere. "This leads us to ask," this economist noted: "Aren't people consciously acting in this way? Isn't the government's inability to deal with this very great demand and major structural deficiencies like unemployment, education, protection of workers' purchasing power, shortages, etc., the result of an undermining of certain political power categories?" An incisive question. Let's admit that the answer is far from being an easy one.

In any case, attributing the existence of the black market to the rigidity of the planning system or to overly lax control over the public companies—as some people have not failed to do—is relying on a partial analysis and it is, therefore of necessity, a partial truth. "Quite the contrary," Mr Boumediene maintained, "the public companies are under extremely tight control. That's exactly where the flaw lies. Prices are stabilized for most scarce products. Now, with the very great demand that

exists, you can organize all the distribution networks you want and tighten all imaginable controls, but you won't obtain any appreciable results. Because the problem is above all political in nature: The exceptions, interventions, alliances, etc. are all forms of interference that condemn things to not functioning normally. The black market is a creation that is the result of a social situation. It, therefore, is to be regarded as belonging with the question of a consumption model. Now, it must be admitted: We have no consumption model. Take, for example, the case of cement. We are witness to a monstrous amount of waste: At a time when from 30 to 40 percent of the cement we use is imported and subsidized by the state, some social classes are building sumptuous villas. Paradoxically, it is not the most deprived social classes whose members are building their own homes. Thus, while it was originally a question of meeting a social need, we note today that this policy favors a display of ostentatious luxury!"

Having said this, are there viable solutions to the black-market problem? Increase production, some will say. But is this possible? Because today the average Algerian is struck in his daily life by the very great disparities that are becoming increasingly noticeable. If you ask workers today to make an effort to make sacrifices for a better future while other social classes live in pleasant idleness, you will quite simply end up with a systematic refusal. It is obvious that, if austerity is to be practiced, it must apply to everyone, from the highly placed official to the semi-skilled worker. As long as only one segment of the population is asked to play the game, without offering them any real prospects [for improvement], the tensions will persist, will even be aggravated.

After all, since there are different representative black-market cases, the solutions cannot be general in nature, rather must be adapted to each type. In any event, one thing is certain: The evil is there and it is imperative for us to think up a cure for it. "One of the most urgent measures to be adopted," Mr Boumediene of the CENEAP stated, "is to skim the surplus currency now in circulation. This is an approach that should be seriously investigated. Of course, we would have to keep from applying this measure automatically. There are also political instructions that should be applied to aid in the effort to reorganize the economy. Take, for example, the distribution of tractors or trucks; this has not been carried out in a consistent way. In other words, the people concerned have not always benefited from it. If these people had been democratically associated, the deviations that have occurred and that largely contributed to strengthening the black market could have been seriously reduced in number."

Another solution might be to combat the interplay of alliances that made it possible first for the "black market" to come into being and then for it to become entrenched. How? Simply by making sensible use of the weapon of democracy: There are associations, organizations that should play their roles fully at this time when

the country wants to change to a regime governed by law. This is a precious opportunity that it would be criminal to let slip by. For it is imperative, now when the Algerian economy is exhausted, to reorient the production machine towards its first objectives by getting all production workers to participate actively and effectively.

Be that as it may, the stakes are so high for the future of the Algerian economy that consideration of this thorny black-market issue would gain from being expanded, gone into in greater detail. Everyone agrees in recognizing that the black-market problem should today be dealt with by the government if we do not want this excrescence to reach an irreversible threshold tomorrow.

It is an undeniable fact that the equivocal policy of "not interfering, letting things go their own way" up to now adopted by the government has only in the final analysis led to an aggravation of the evil from which the first to suffer are Algerians with modest incomes. Now that the Constitution proclaims that the people is the source of all power, is it not inadmissible for the latter to have to continue to submit to the power of this dominant minority constituted by the speculators?

BAHRAIN

Employment Statistics Reviewed

44040366 *Manama SADA AL-USBU' in Arabic*
7 Mar 89 p 8-10

[Interview with 'Abd-al-Rahman Salman al-Zayani, director of the department of labor in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, by Mustafa 'Alam, date and place unspecified; first three paragraphs are SADA AL-USBU' introduction]

[Text] To begin with, I admit that I am biased in favor of this man, for he was able, unintentionally, to land me in his corner!

The conversation between us—him and me—on the latest paper in the unemployment file began sharply. I immediately began to cast accusations, but the smile never left his face, and he began to say, "My dear, I need more accusations. I am ready." He would reply with great sincerity, and also—and this is important—with great understanding.

And...but I will not influence your opinion with this confession of mine. I only invite you to read the latest paper in the unemployment file by its author 'Abd-al-Rahman Salman al-Zayani, director of the department of labor in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and you be the judge.

[SADA AL-USBU'] When you are in a position of responsibility for the department of labor in any country, perhaps it is difficult for you to admit that there is unemployment. Therefore my first question to Mr al-Zayani was: do you admit, sir, that there is unemployment in Bahrain?

[Al-Zayani] Yes, there is unemployment. In the records, 3,000 unemployed looking for work are registered, and our responsibility is to employ them in the private sector.

This figure does not represent all the unemployed. There is a large proportion that do not register their names with us, especially women.

I believe that the number of unemployed varies between 8 and 10 thousand. This figure represents 8-10 percent of the total national labor force in Bahrain, and everyone agrees that the presence of 4 percent unemployed, or what is called the hard-core four percent, is an acceptable rate that does not constitute an unemployment problem. But we in Bahrain have now gone beyond this hard-core percentage, therefore unemployment has come into being.

Perhaps it will be helpful to realize that this is not the first time that Bahrain has faced the phenomenon of unemployment and the problem of finding work for Bahrainis. The same problem occurred in the mid sixties, when the production of oil reached a peak and there was no room to increase production and increase income, and the door to development was shut. To solve the problem the state set out to diversify the economy, so instead of depending solely oil, it began to turn towards industry such as aluminum smelting and associated industries, ship repair in dry docks, and the petrochemicals industry and foodstuffs. The office of development was established to study and follow up on those projects.

At that time there was a problem and it was solved. As for the unemployment now, it has three causes:

First, the slow growth in the national economy at the present time because of the fall in oil prices, which affects the degree of expansion in the process of economic development.

Secondly, the continuing rise in the birth rate among the population of Bahrain, inasmuch as it has reached 3.1 percent a year. So in Bahrain, a youthful nation "in which the proportion of young people is increasing", half the population is coming into the labor force.

Thirdly, the abundance of a foreign labor force that is cheap and often skilled, and the easy means for procuring it.

[SADA AL-USBU'] If these are the reasons for unemployment, the question remaining is: how did it happen and what was the climate in which the problem was born? We asked, and we left the answer to our interviewee.

[Al-Zayani] From the beginning of 1974 until 1984, the "boom decade," the income of the Gulf states doubled, and it was decided to hasten the process of development as much as possible, which created an urgent need for foreign labor, and it began to pour into the country.

But in 1984 the period of economic stagnation began, so the need for foreign labor decreased. Statistics of the department of emigration and visas indicated that in '86 and '87 about 63,000 foreign workers left the country and did not return. But there was still a need for foreign labor, because what we had built in the years of the boom needed constant maintenance, therefore we see that foreign labor shifted its weight from the building and construction sector to the services sector.

The unemployment now existing in Bahrain is of that type that is called "structural" unemployment, or the gap between what the national labor force in various vocations supplies and what is demanded in the labor market. The truth is that the graduates of the educational process were not in tune with the needs of the labor market, but that was not a failing on the part of the Ministry of Education, for that is a phenomenon that always occurs and needs constant treatment. When these graduates were trained they were able to fit the demand in the labor market.

The big gap in the balance between national labor and foreign labor appears obvious in the private sector, where foreign labor comprises 75 percent of the total labor force in it, whereas national labor does not comprise more than 25 percent.

The matter appears to be balanced in the government sector, where 76 percent are Bahrainis, and only 24 percent are foreign.

From the standpoint of my daily practice, I see that the big gap in the balance between the two labor forces in the private sector is attributable essentially to the fact that small establishments cannot afford to pay the wages of the Bahraini worker, since we see that Bahrainization is up to more than 75 percent in the large establishments such as banks and the large industrial establishments. The Bahraini has been able to demonstrate his success in these sectors, whereas the balance between the Bahraini and the foreigner in the small establishments has become nonexistent.

There is a growing and important sector, namely the hotel and restaurant sector, which is labor intensive. Currently there is a large foreign labor force in it, whereas the percentage of national workers is low, and I believe that this is attributable to the Bahraini aversion

to working in this sector, for three reasons, namely: social perceptions that take a negative view of service jobs in this sector, and long work hours and changing work schedules, as well as the low wages that do not attract Bahrainis.

I believe that this sector can absorb many of the members of the national labor force, and there are great opportunities for advancement in it.

[SADA AL-USBU'] We began to open the file of accusations against the Ministry of Labor on the issue of unemployment.

The first accusation: Sir, you are accused of opening the door wide to foreign labor, especially "cheap" labor, which made the Bahraini feel like a stranger in the labor market of his own country.

[Al-Zayani] (Our interviewee smiled, and answered quietly and confidently). I can respond to this accusation from the standpoint of my responsibility as director of the department of labor, to give my assurances that we did not leave the door wide open—as some imagine or claim—for there are controls and prescribed paths through which any application to hire foreign labor passes. This application is entered on a form in which the required number of workers and the types of skills they are required to have are cited. After that it goes on to the local employment unit, where the applications for work of the unemployed who are registered with us are pulled to see whether there is any unemployed Bahraini who wants any of the vocations that are mentioned in the application for employment of foreign labor submitted to the unit. If one is found, this Bahraini is sent to the applicant instead of the foreign worker that he requested. Another Bahraini or a third might be sent, if the two parties, the employer and the unemployed Bahraini, fail to be convinced of the need of each for the other.

The fact is, we do not have the power to compel an employer to hire the Bahraini, because do we have the power to reject the hiring application that is submitted, if we are convinced that he is not serious about employing the Bahraini instead of the foreigner.

Perhaps this accusation might seem in part to be true, because the department of labor is still giving work permits to foreigners. But let us be frank—what can I do, as director of the department of labor, when an employer asks me for a foreign worker for a job in which a Bahraini will not agree to work?

There is also another aspect to the controls that the department of labor exercises when renewing the residence permits of the foreigners: then the same process as before is repeated to look for a Bahraini to take the place of the foreigner whose stay has ended.

Thus I say: yes, we are still giving work permits to foreigners, but we are not leaving the door open without controls, or open wide as some accuse us of doing.

[SADA AL-USBU'] The second accusation: an official authority blamed the Ministry of Labor for its inability to get a true, comprehensive count of the unemployed in the country, and many of those involved in the issue of unemployment have directed the same accusation at the ministry. How does Mr al-Zayani deflect this accusation from the ministry?

[Al-Zayani] (The man's face still wears a smile and confidence.) First there is not a single office in Bahrain that can give a comprehensive count of the unemployed, and the true count can only be made through statistical assumptions, as long as there is no process linking this count to a use assigned to it.

Let me clarify this complicated process. The social security agency, for example, spreads the umbrella of its protections to cover only the establishments that have ten or more workers. But if this umbrella were extended to include all, and this umbrella supposedly insures against unemployment, it would in that case have a record that would give you daily the number of unemployed.

Another example: if there were a system of taxes in Bahrain, in which all the workers would pay prescribed taxes on their income, the number of unemployed would immediately appear in full.

There is another example, for clarification only. So far there is no legal provision that prevents the dead from being buried without a death certificate having been issued, therefore we do not have a comprehensive and precise list of deaths. In contrast to that we do have a precise list of births, because we have tied the birth certificate to many uses, most notably that you cannot enroll your children in school if they do not have birth certificates.

Thus the data system in any country is such that if you want comprehensiveness and a precise count, you must create an obligatory process that makes use of it.

[SADA AL-USBU'] A small but important aside: Mr 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Zayani is the first Bahraini to receive a bachelor's degree in statistics, which he got from Cairo University. He also got two graduate degrees in computer systems and administration. That point was needed to explain his words about the data system.

We resume our accusations (for he had laughed as he said: "Give me more of them; I am ready"). The third accusation: some believe that the process of setting controls, no matter how broad, on work visas for foreigners will not succeed in putting the Bahraini in the place of the foreigner as long as the opportunity is there for an employer to hire a foreign worker at half and often at a

third of the wage of a Bahraini. There they accuse the Ministry of Labor of failing to set up a schedule of wages, whereby a minimum wage for every job would be imposed, which the employers would adhere to. Thus the need to prefer the foreign worker over the Bahraini, who will not accept the paltry wages which foreign workers, especially the Asian ones, accept, would be removed. The accusation is directed against you, and the defense is left to you, director of labor.

[Al-Zayani] I personally refuse to set a minimum wage, for a simple reason, namely that the sweeping majority of workers in Bahrain are foreign, therefore a law to set wages would benefit the foreigners at the expense of the profits of the Bahraini employers, whereas the benefit to the Bahraini worker would be extremely limited.

I might say that the time has come for Bahraini employers to realize the importance of sacrificing a portion of their profits to support the national labor force by giving the Bahraini that acceptable salary that would give him a decent standard of living. The only schedule that we go by for salaries of Bahrainis is the government schedule for employees.

[SADA AL-USBU'] The fourth accusation comes from the employers against the Ministry of Labor, and it is linked to the phenomenon of worker flight, which ultimately adds a new dimension to the issue of unemployment.

The employers say that when the ministry apprehends a [foreign] worker fleeing from his sponsor, it demands from that sponsor the cost of a return ticket to send the fugitive worker to his country, and when the sponsor refuses to pay, because he has not benefitted from the services of the fugitive, the ministry allows this worker to work in the country and compete with Bahrainis for the available jobs, which deepens the problem of unemployment.

[Al-Zayani] (refuting this accusation quickly and decisively) This accusation is not true at all. Any fugitive worker that we apprehend, we do not allow to leave the detention center in the al-Jufayr region at all, except to go to the airport to return to his country. However, we believe that the cost of his return ticket should be paid by the original employer who brought him to the country, because ultimately anything that results from the behavior of the foreign worker in the country is the responsibility of the sponsor who brought him.

If the sponsor refuses to pay the cost of the ticket, we put him on the blacklist, we halt all his dealings with the ministry, and we leave the fugitive in the detention center until he pays the cost of his own ticket, whether from his previous earnings or until he collects the cost from his friends in the country. But I assure you once again that we do not allow him leave the center, except to go immediately to the airport.

I believe that the only practical solution to the problem of foreign workers running away is to require that a bank bond be posted on each foreign work permit, such that this bond would cover the return ticket, as well as benefits, along with remuneration and bonuses, that might be due the worker.

[SADA AL-USBU'] We left the subject of accusations to go on to the opinion of the director of labor on confronting the issue of unemployment. How?

[Al-Zayani] First we must recognize an important fact, namely that for social reasons Bahraini workers are not interested in all the jobs that are available in the labor market. By understanding this fact we set about confronting unemployment through the following steps which represent my personal views on the solution to this problem.

First, compiling and defining the jobs that Bahrainis accept.

Secondly, compiling the number of Bahrainis and foreigners who seek these jobs. Upon compiling the number of foreigners, that figure can be considered to represent the existing demand in the labor market.

Third, determine the supply of unemployed, along with the graduates of the educational process as well as those who drop out of it by making assumptions and precise calculations in order to reach the most precise estimates of those Bahrainis entering the labor market every year.

Fourth, starting a process of replacement or Bahrainization on the basis of what is available or supplied in terms of the Bahraini labor force, and establishing annual guidelines for the rate of the replacement process, along with establishing a system of incentives to employers who comply with these guidelines, as well as a system of penalties for those who do not.

Fifth, creating vocational opportunities appropriate for women's work, because we will have a big surplus of them who will not find the opportunity to work as things now stand with the jobs currently available in the labor market.

Sixth, for the replacement process to succeed, the level and quality of training of all kinds in the specialized training centers in the country must be raised, until they conform to the needs of the labor market and guarantee that the worker will remain on the job and that the employer will be pleased with his productivity.

Seventh, setting up appropriate information programs to raise awareness and change the negative social view of seeking certain vocations, on condition that these programs be planned and thoroughly studied in a practical way, and bring up the issue indirectly so that it will be accepted among the people.

[SADA AL-USBU'] The words of the director of labor came to an end, and we have finished reading the last paper in the unemployment file, and the decision now lies with those who have it.

EGYPT

Mubarak Discusses Radicals, Public Sector

45040362 Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 22 May 89 p 3

["Text" of KULL AL-'ARAB interview of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak by Samir Khayri and Mustafa Bakri, in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] The Paris-based KULL AL-'ARAB magazine last Monday published an interview with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. As Egyptian newspapers no longer customarily publish interviews, AL-AHRAR presents KULL AL-'ARAB'S interview with President Mubarak, which was conducted last week by Dr Samir Khayri, the editor-in-chief of KULL AL-'ARAB, and Mustafa Bakri, the director of the KULL AL-'ARAB bureau in Cairo. The following is the text of the interview:

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Your excellency the president, you played an important political role in initiating the American-Palestinian dialogue. What is your view of the gains achieved in the first two rounds of the dialogue?

[Mubarak] The start of the dialogue between the American administration and the PLO is doubtless a step which will be of considerable help in boosting the peace process in the region. Egypt is constantly making efforts to continue the momentum of this dialogue so that it achieves its objectives. I believe that the push to develop this dialogue, and to focus it on achieving tangible results, depends on the method and nature of this dialogue between the two parties. It also depends on the degree of Palestinian unity under the PLO's leadership. To be more precise, brother Abu-'Ammar sometimes makes statements, unexpectedly encountering other statements made by several Palestinian organizations, which appear to contradict his statements. In my opinion, this justifies extreme doubt regarding the unity of the Palestinian position, even if we could be certain of the Palestinian people's support for Yasir 'Arafat's position on peace.

I want to emphasize that Egypt is tireless in its efforts to push the peace process forward in order to attain a just, comprehensive peace. In this context, we give top priority to the American-Palestinian dialogue, and ways to develop it.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] However, what is the status of your efforts to arrange a meeting between 'Arafat and James Baker as a prelude to a meeting between 'Arafat and Bush?

[Mubarak] We are definitely interested in 'Abu -'Ammar meeting with all world leaders so that he can explain his position on peace, and so that we can reach the starting point in a course leading to the convocation of an international conference. In this framework, we have made efforts to prepare the atmosphere for establishing new relations between Jordan and the PLO on one hand, and between the PLO and the United States and the countries of the European group on the other. Everyone knows that Egypt has provided much of the impetus and dynamic for Palestinian activity, based on its belief in its national role in supporting the cause.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] During the last few days, French President Mitterrand met with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat in Paris. What is your evaluation of this meeting?

[KULL AL-'ARAB] I consider this meeting an encouraging beginning in relations between the two parties. President Mitterrand courageously made the proper decision in this regard. We held lengthy discussions regarding this matter, which was crowned with success. I believe that this meeting will help much to push the wheel of peace forward, especially as France has an important role to play as one of the five permanent member-states of the Security Council.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] You recently made an important visit to the United States, during which you and President Bush discussed ways to assure the development of peace in the Middle East region. Are there any new developments in the position of the Bush administration regarding the crisis in the region?

[Mubarak] The discussions which were held with the American administration during my recent visit to Washington confirmed that there is a perceptible American understanding of the Middle East problem. Perhaps the current administration's proximity to the decisionmaking process during the Reagan administration was helpful in this regard. The current administration was knowledgeable regarding all developments and situations in the Middle East and had a profound understanding of the dimensions and causes of the conflict. Nothing is more indicative of this than the statements made by President George Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker, which included important remarks on the political rights of the Palestinian people, the end of the occupation, land in exchange for peace, and an international conference. These statements are doubtlessly indicative and important insofar as they were made by President Bush. Therefore, we must encourage this course of action and not desist from guiding and advocating it, regardless of the difficulties.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] However, given Shamir's insistence on rejecting the idea of an international conference, do you expect that efforts aimed at convening this conference while Shamir is prime minister of Israel will be successful?

[Mubarak] I do not wish to discuss Shamir, lest he assume that I am interfering in Israel's internal affairs. However, I will say that Egypt recovered territory based on a peace agreement concluded under the former Begin government. If Shamir has a specific political objective, I would like to say to him: If you are seeking direct negotiations, an opportunity is presenting itself, albeit through an international conference. Actually, I see no reason for Shamir not to agree to the formula for this conference. The convocation of this conference represents, in my opinion, a golden opportunity for Arab-Israeli peace. The biggest winner in such a conference would be Israel, which also needs peace. I expect that cooperation between the Arabs and Israel in numerous fields would follow the development of peace in the region. Is that not more advantageous than wars and destruction?

[KULL AL-'ARAB] At the al-'Aqabah and al-Isma'iliyah summits, you established a unified framework for Arab cooperation, especially between the primary parties to the conflict. Could we please be informed of the essence of your position on Shamir's program for elections in the occupied lands?

[Mubarak] My major concern is that the elections would be a means to swamp the peace process in the region. We must first ask about the true objective behind these elections, as well as the law that would be the basis for holding them and the criteria that would be established to ensure their integrity and honesty. All of that is currently unclear. There is also the Palestinian view on these elections; there is a refusal to hold elections in the shadow of the occupation and without international supervision. For all of these reasons, I prefer to wait until the matter develops further and all developments regarding it are known.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] More than two years ago, I asked you in an exclusive interview with KULL AL-'ARAB about the date of your visit to the Soviet Union. May I pose the question again?

[Mubarak] The Soviet Union is a great state. We have very good relations with the Soviets. During his recent visit to Egypt, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze conveyed to me an invitation from the Soviet leader, Gorbachev. I accepted the invitation and will visit at a latter time, when circumstances afford such a visit.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Regarding the second summit of the Arab Cooperation Council, to what extent can we understand the council's philosophy in the context of the special nature of its relation to the Arab League and the other cooperation councils?

[Mubarak] All of these councils emanate from the Arab league. Hence, they are neither separate nor removed from the league, but linked to it. They take upon themselves some of the concerns and endeavors of the Arab

League. Hence, no Arab problem will remain confined to these councils alone. Rather, all are interested in studying it, beginning with the Arab League and ending with these councils. While several Arab countries may not be associated with any of these councils, they are nonetheless united with all Arabs in the framework of the Arab League, which does not preclude, however, the establishment of Arab councils among several of these states for the sake of promoting a high degree of cooperation and unity through solidarity.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] That being the case, what is the nature of the goals of the Arab Cooperation Council?

[Mubarak] The Arab Cooperation Council is an economic council whose goal is to establish economic integration among the states participating in it. It is not an axis opposing anyone. Rather, it resembles the experiment of the European Common Market, which will become more powerful in 1992. Any sincere Arab must consider this experiment, so that the Arabs can have a counterpart to it. If we are serious about this, we must start preparing for it now, because this is an era of large, extensive economic entities, by means of which close cooperation between peoples can be achieved.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] What about the Lebanese crisis?

[Mubarak] Egypt announced its position on the need for the withdrawal of all foreign forces. After that, the Lebanese can sit down together to decide the fate of their country. This is the solution to this problem.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] After the abrogation of the joint defense agreement between Egypt and Sudan by the Sudanese government, what is your response to what is said about Egypt not having been committed to implementing the articles of the agreement pertaining to Egypt standing beside the Sudanese government in the war against the John Garang movement?

[Mubarak] I do not want to reiterate the special nature of our relations with the fraternal Sudanese people. This is a matter of fact and historical reality established by tribulations and circumstances. Nor do I wish to discuss the decision made by the Sudanese government regarding this agreement. That matter pertains to the government of Sudan alone, which is the originator of the decision on it. However, I would like to say that Egypt has never failed to aid fraternal Sudan, or to stand by it for the sake of its unity and the unity of its territory. The matter of Egypt entering the war against John Garang is quite removed from the joint defense agreement, which was established for joint defense against any external enemy. In the case of John Garang, this is an internal war, and Egypt refuses to enter into any internal war against anyone. Nonetheless, I maintain that Egypt has played, and continues to play, an important role in solving the problem of southern Sudan so as to protect the well-being of a single, unified Sudan.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] How do you view relations with Africa, especially in view of the fact that you have been nominated to assume the position of chairman of the African Organization [OAU?] in its next session?

[Mubarak] Africa represents, for us in Egypt, a depth with which it is impossible to dispense. We are striving for a high degree of cooperation and collective, mutual understanding with the countries of the African group. There are numerous possibilities for economic and political cooperation between the Arabs and Africa. I believe that Arab-African relations are a candidate for a high degree of such cooperation in the near future.

[Mubarak] Your excellency, permit us to discuss with you several issues pertaining to domestic activity. In the forefront of these issues is your decision to replace Field Marshall Abu-Ghazalah, which came as a surprise at home and abroad. Much was said in the Western media about the reasons for this change. What is your explanation of the reasons for this change?

[Mubarak] This is a natural decision and a very normal measure. Abu-Ghazalah spent nine years as the minister of defense. I made a decision to replace him, and I appointed him to another position. It is interesting that you state that much was said in the Western media. I say to you that some Western newspapers incorrectly believe that the minister of defense in third world countries holds his position for life, and thereby constitutes a center of power. Abu Ghazalah did not have permanent tenure. He was neither a center of power, nor was he replaced in connection with a decision by the International Monetary Fund [IMF] to reduce the budget of the armed forces and the like. The truth of the matter is that the IMF did not make such a request, and Abu-Ghazalah did not reject it. All of these utterances have no factual basis.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] However, people are asking why the president has selected a defense minister who is admittedly a son of the armed forces and one of its heroic leaders, but has nonetheless been away from military service for more than eight years?

[Mubarak] I in turn ask, why did the Egyptian people choose Husni Mubarak to be the president of the state, and why did I choose Dr 'Atif Sidqi to be prime minister, and Safwat al-Sharif to be minister of information, and Mamduh al-Baltaji for the State Information Service, etc. There are reasons and components pertaining to all of these decisions. Decisions in Egypt are not made randomly. Rather, they are based on scientific and carefully-studied foundations, on the basis of which I selected Sabri Abu-Talib to be minister of defense.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] What is the status of negotiations with the IMF? Do you expect Egypt and the IMF to reach an agreement according to which Egypt would obtain a letter of intent permitting it to reschedule its debts before this July?

[Mubarak] Yes, I hope that we will reach a solution quickly, God willing. I would like to re-emphasize that we are making our best effort to reach an agreement with the fund that is compatible with our capabilities and social reality. Reform must be compatible with our self interest and the interests of the broad base of the people. More precisely, the goal of reform is to build for the coming generations and to maintain a strong Egyptian economy. Even if there were no IMF, reform would impose itself for the sake of the future of the country and its future generations.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Depositors in investment companies have been waiting many months for the government to find a way to recover their savings. How long will the depositors have to wait? Is it expected that other companies, which have submitted requests to adjust their practices, will be permitted to operate according to the provisions of the law?

[Mubarak] I was very pained by this disaster which befell the depositors. I would have hoped that they would be more careful than that. Nonetheless, although the situation has come to this extreme, we have no alternative but to make a maximum effort to locate these funds and return them to their owners. Depositors can be confident that the state is making every effort in this regard. We have had numerous contacts with foreign countries in order to recover these funds and return them to Egypt, and we will continue our efforts to solve this problem. Regarding companies wishing to adjust their practices, the law alone is the deciding factor in this matter.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Your excellency, when might a decision be issued regarding the appointment of a vice-president?

[Mubarak] I will make the proper decision regarding this matter when the time comes. The constitution itself does not require me to appoint a vice-president at a certain time. Even so, this is an issue which I always subject to strictly delimited appraisals.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] You promised that you would meet with opposition leaders when the opposition reforms its course. Which opposition practices do you find objectionable?

[Mubarak] The opposition is part of the system. True, there are observations regarding several practices. However, this is the nature of democracy. In my estimation, opposition practices are better at present compared to the past. However, the road is long and difficult. Therefore, we must endure in order to obtain a sound, constructive opposition which serves the interests of the people. I will not at all hesitate to meet with opposition leaders when the national interest necessitates that I do so.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Has the time not come to permit some political forces which have been denied the right to form parties, such as the Nasirists for example, to engage in legal activity in the framework of their own parties?

[Mubarak] What does Nasirism mean? If it means those affiliated with the July revolution and those who defend its principles, we are affiliated with the revolution. The issue pertains not so much to names and designations as it does to the national role fulfilled by each of us in order to serve the people and protect its interests. True, I hope that the day will come when everything will be permitted. However, so far there are numerous issues which must receive our attention. There are circumstances which require of us unity and cohesion rather than fragmentation and disintegration. Nevertheless, whoever wishes to form a political party, and has well-defined goals, let him take the legal road. If the Parties Committee rejects him, he must resort to the judiciary. If the judiciary rules in favor of any political party, the ruling is effective immediately. However, at the same time, I find it unacceptable that some people serve as a tool with which to strike at the stability of Egypt or attempt to damage Egypt's interests, such as that newspaper which was bent on harming our relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That behavior is rejected in form and content.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] In the light of the confrontations with extremist elements witnessed from time to time in the area of security, do you believe that the method of dialogue with these elements has reached an impasse?

[Mubarak] This current is not as significant as you make it out to be. The number of extremists here is similar to, or perhaps less than, the number of extremists in any other state, without going into specific names. Sometimes I listen to broadcasts discussing this phenomenon, and it seems to me that this matter has become a pervasive phenomenon. This is not true. This current is under complete control. There is no fear of it. As for dialogue—yes, there are those schooled in dialogue. As for those who take the path of violence and terrorism, what kind of dialogue can we pursue with them? Islam is far removed from violence and extremism. Therefore, these people are alien to our true Islamic religion.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Your excellency the president, why has the September 1971 constitution not been amended, especially since the phase in which it was issued has been overtaken by current events and circumstances, which have reached the point of requiring the formulation of new provisions which suit the current reality?

[Mubarak] The Egyptian constitution is fit to remain as is. Events have not overtaken it, as some are trying to maintain. There are numerous issues requiring everyone to be unified. The most important of these issues, to

which I have given precedence, is economic development. When the time comes, and I sense a favorable opportunity to amend the constitution, I will not hesitate to do so if something is in need of a change.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Following the judiciary's ruling on the legality of the membership of 78 new deputies in the People's Assembly, is it correct that there is an intention to disband the assembly in the near future?

[Mubarak] I ask you, why would I disband the assembly? What possible reason is there for that at present?

[KULL AL-'ARAB] On the basis of the revision of the Assembly Elections Law, after the judiciary's ruling on the unconstitutionality of the Consultative Council Elections Law?

[Mubarak] When we enact a new law for elections to the People's Assembly, and agree to disband the assembly, I will disband it. However, to date, we have not formulated a new People's Assembly law. We enacted the Individual Election Law for the Consultative Council. If that did not please the opposition, I do not understand what they truly want. Previously, the opposition objected to elections by proportional list and by absolute list and demanded individual election. When the law was issued, they resumed their demands for the list again!

[KULL AL-'ARAB] What is your comment on several violent practices which have begun to extend to parties and unions in Egypt, as for example, the Lawyers Union and the Labor Party?

[Mubarak] These are unacceptable, albeit natural phenomena. However, ultimately, only what is true is always valid, which is what is important here. True, I am pained by some of these practices. However, what can be done; democracy has become the method which governs our actions and positions. The government has not intervened in any union or political conflict. We remain aloof from these struggles, although I would hope that they not recur in our society.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] It has been noted that bounds have been overstepped regarding the language of discourse between the opposition and several ministers. Why are you intervening to set matters right?

[Mubarak] Is it reasonable for me to induce a journalist to criticize or insult a minister in order to tell him that something is right or wrong? I require from everyone, an elevated level of speech in dialogue and discussion when it is in the interest of the country. I read an attack against a minister a while ago, and I was hoping that the language of discourse would be on a higher plane than that. Would a journalist wish to be open to criticism or derision in this form in front of his family and society? This causes the children to develop many psychological complexes. Therefore, I demand deference to dignity and respect for all. Mistakes are made. This is a part of

life. However, criticism must be objective. At the same time, refinement of the language of discourse and the mode of dialogue is also needed.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] What about the future of the public sector?

[Mubarak] I will not sell the public sector. The public sector is a national, economic pillar. Its sale would mean giving free reign to price increases, which would most certainly, and unacceptably, be at the expense of the toiling people. The fact that the public sector provides many commodities to the Egyptians is a matter of considerable importance, because this sector controls the price of a commodity and does not leave it to supply and demand. In addition to the public sector, I also favor a strong, capable private sector, which could play an important role in the development plan and in supplying the needs of society.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] We are approaching the end of the 20th century. In this age of challenges, could one say that some change has occurred in the Egyptian personality since the July 1952 revolution? What is your conception of the model which should be followed?

[Mubarak] We are an Arab-Islamic state. Therefore, the Egyptian personality is the possessor and maker of our longstanding cultural history, whose course has been influenced by both Arabism and Islam. We have Islamic and Arab values. Therefore, no change in this personality can harm its values and ethics. Yes, development is a characteristic of life. However, who said that the development of methods of action and thought can influence all behavioral values which are observed? The Egyptian personality has continued, throughout this period to preserve its values and commitments. This is something good which presages a great future governed by values and principles.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] And the consumerist tendency of citizens?

[Mubarak] This is blind imitation which some people must eliminate. This tendency is neither praiseworthy nor desirable. In addition, it damages the interests of the country and its economy.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Finally, permit us to touch upon the human side of your personality. How do you balance your responsibilities to the state with your personal life.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Throughout my life, I have existed for my work, my children and my family. This cannot be disputed. We meet together over meals, and we sit and discuss our affairs with complete freedom. It is true that responsibility has its worries, but they do not make me forsake my family obligations.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Why have you chosen squash among numerous games to practice daily?

[Mubarak] I played soccer initially, then hockey and tennis, and finally squash. Squash is a beneficial game in terms of exercise, and it does not require more than one other player. Therefore, I chose it and have continued to play it for many years.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Who is the best player against whom you have played?

[Mubarak] There is no one in particular. I play squash as a hobby, nothing more.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] It is said that whoever meets with you does not feel uncomfortable. Why is that so?

[Mubarak] Let them ask themselves.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] We would like to hear about you.

[Mubarak] I am candid, and accustomed to speaking only the truth. What is in my heart is on my tongue.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Despite your belief in freedom, how did you feel when your brother, Sami Mubarak, joined the Wafd Party?

[Mubarak] That is his personal freedom. I do not argue with him about anything. He has a mind, and he has his decisions. Let anyone who is responsible for himself and his decision join any party he wishes.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] How do you make decisions?

[Mubarak] There is no decision which can be made without studying, listening, and researching. I listen to all opinions. After that, I decide. I have the full picture from every official and adequate information regarding any phenomenon in society. Therefore, I make decisions calmly when the time comes.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] When did you first meet former President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir?

[Mubarak] When I was a member of the general staff at the war college.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] And your first meeting with al-Sadat?

[Mubarak] The first time was in an Arab country, when he was vice-president under 'Abd-al-Nasir. The second time was when he was president of the country. After that there were numerous meetings.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] Do you have time for leisure reading?

[Mubarak] I do not have much time for that. However, I read from time to time, particularly books related to a specific problem requiring a political decision.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] How were you informed of your appointment to the vice-presidency of the republic in 1975?

[Mubarak] President al-Sadat sent for me. We met at his retreat at al-Qanatir. He sat with me from 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m., discussing his desire to select a vice-president. He continued to review with me different military leaders. Suddenly, I found him saying to me that he had selected me to be vice-president and that he did not deem anyone more suited than I for the position. I had expected that he would make this decision two years later, for example. After eating dinner with President al-Sadat, I headed for home, continuing to think for a long time about the matter. However, I found myself facing my destiny, and I became vice-president.

[KULL AL-'ARAB] And your recollections of 6 October 1981?

[Mubarak] After the assassination of President al-Sadat, I found myself compelled to accept this position, which I continue to hold. The following day was the date for the meeting of the political bureau of the NDP [National Democratic Party] to select a president. However, I was surprised, because the bureau had met that same day at 6:00 sharp and had made a decision. I found myself compelled to accept this position, especially after my election by the people, which is a greater responsibility and trust, because it is linked with the fate of the people and the future of the country.

People's Assembly Committee Sees 'No Real Development' in Aswan

45040317B Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 3 Apr 89 p 6

[Article by Jamal 'Abd al-Sami': "Local Government Committee of People's Assembly Observations: No Real Development in Aswan—Lake Nasir Victimized by Worker Drain and Smuggling of Fish."]

[Excerpts] The People's Assembly Committee on Local Government, headed by 'Abd al-Fattah al-Dali, visited the governorates of Qina and Aswan where it spent eight days of intensive field inspections and evaluations of local development projects.

AL-AHRAR, which accompanied the committee, records the following four important observations: [passage omitted]

A successful experiment in Aswan is the construction of al-Nasiriyah district. Inhabitants have already received their land titles and a local council, acting as a miniature parliament, has been elected to express the will of its people and solve their problems.

Aswan has also begun using Egyptian farm experts to reclaim new acreage and develop projects for animal husbandry and alternative fodder.

Another good experiment in Aswan is a furniture factory in the village of Shaklab,**Drao directorate. The facility manufactures all kinds of rural and urban household items for sale at prices lower than generally available throughout the country.

Tourism has developed into the strongest job magnet in Qina, where the number of families has increased tenfold over the past five years.

Qina also boasts wonderful projects for water, dairy products, poultry, cattle, and the reclamation of sandy acreage in areas away from those currently under cultivation. Sanitary sewage projects, mostly begun under the former governor, are also good examples of grass roots effort.

The delegates, members of the local government committee, made the following observations on their field visit.

1. Isma'il 'Abd al-Karim Baghdadi of Isma'iliyah: The Nasiriyah quarter was one of the most outstanding experiments in Aswan but we witnessed little else that could be called "real development." We could not visit many other facilities because the governorate, intentionally or inadvertently, did not include them in our schedule.

In Qina, and specifically in Luxor, a resolution must be found to the conflict between warring agencies involved in jurisdictional disputes. A decree should establish an executive council composed of representatives of all those agencies. The council, under oversight of the local administration, would have authority to make summary decisions.

2. Salah Hilmi of Fayyum: The main observation about Aswan is that development, while concentrated on tourism in historical regions, is ignored in other sectors.

Agriculture and fisheries are totally neglected despite their limitless development potential. They are not given enough attention. No big investments are needed to develop that land and yet there is not the slightest effort to exploit it.

We also observed that prices for Lake Nasir fish, inconceivable as it is, are fixed by the ministry of supply in Cairo. The resultant sharp decline in lake production and significant producer and consumer price disparity entice black marketers to poach the lake and smuggle its fish.

The strangest thing about Qina is the momentous infighting among state agencies over jurisdictional matters. No one seems to know who is running Luxor, that first city of tourism. Is it the department of tourism, or is it irrigation, electricity, aviation, or the governorate? No one knows the answer.

3. Ahmad al-Wardani of Daqahliyah: In general, we saw no real development in Aswan except for a few light industries. Aswan, however, has taken the first steps towards land reclamation and such food security projects as meat, eggs, and dairy products as well as fruits and vegetables.

As far as tourism is concerned, jurisdictional disputes in Luxor must be resolved in order to focus energies on tourism which is the main, or one of the main, sources of national income.

4. 'Abd al-Fattah al-Shurbagi of Al-Sharqiyyah: Industrialization aside, only an "agricultural Egypt" can eliminate the food shortfall and solve Egypt's economic crises. A solution to the problem requires two specific actions.

Local agencies must hasten to build infrastructure by paving roads distributing land, and conducting feasibility studies on providing irrigation water. [passage omitted]

5. 'Abd al-Fattah al-Dali, chairman of the local government committee of the People's Assembly: I had hoped to see real development projects in Aswan with contributions by the local administration. Most of the projects included in our schedule were routine and can not be categorized as real development.

We also noted that the exploitation of Lake Nasir is flawed and causes worker drain and smuggling of fish. Methods of fishing the lake are also largely primitive.

Qina has two projects that could be a sound basis for real local development—a project begun 10 years ago for food security through "rationalization" and a 200-feddan experimental farm run by the governorate.

We are opposed to bringing the state into land reclamation projects because this would drive costs up and discourage individuals with farm experience from purchasing and reclaiming such lands.

Villages are being developed in Qina where water, electricity, and infrastructure are being developed at a cost of \$9 million.

He added that the local administration currently lacks capability to properly develop tourism and emphasized that red tape must be eliminated once and for all and local officials must be vested with wide-ranging authority in order to surmount current obstacles that impede Egyptian development.

Committee Denounces Knesset's Attempt to Halt Aid

NC1206103289 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0936 GMT 12 Jun 89

[Text] Cairo, 12 Jun (MENA)—The Egyptian Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity has called on world public opinion and non-governmental international organizations to use every possible means to fight the Israeli Knesset's new plan. This plan is aimed at halting international humane assistance to the Palestinian people and confiscating the aid which has already been offered to the Palestinians on the grounds that it would benefit what the Israelis call terrorists.

In a statement issued today, the committee said that, having failed to repress the popular intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories, Israel is resorting to legislation as a way of tightening the siege on the Palestinians, starving them, and breaking their will.

The statement said that the Israeli practices that aim at isolating the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza will result in turning the intifadah into an all-out civil disobedience campaign.

'Abd-Al-Majid Discusses Arab Affairs

JN0606153989 Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic
4 Jun 89 pp 16, 17, 71

[Interview with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Egyptian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, by Mahmud Fawzi—date, place not given]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] [UKTUBAR] How do you view the results of reconciliation between Egypt and Syria and Libya? Are they mere hopes, promises, hugs, and kisses which might not materialize, as was the case before? Arabs and Egyptians have a mixed feeling of joy and fear over this reconciliation.

['Abd-al-Majid] Naturally there should be an overwhelming feeling of joy that we share with the Libyan and Syrian peoples upon seeing meetings and reconciliations between President Mubarak, President Hafiz al-Asad, and Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi. It is natural for people to wish that these meetings and reconciliations turn into reality, and not, as you say, only smiles and hugs. We must say that emotions occupy a basic part of our decisions, but I hope there will be a rational thinking linking our common interests. These are vital matters for people. Therefore, I view the future with optimism while taking into consideration and learning from the previous lessons and experiences so that mistakes would not be repeated. There were bitter past experiences and what is important is that they do not recur and that this reconciliation is motivated by a sincere desire. I personally believe that this desire exists because peoples naturally seek reconciliation and leaders respond to these demands.

[UKTUBAR] When will we see Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid in Tripoli and Damascus and Libyan Foreign Liaison Secretary 'Azzuz al-Talhi and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Cairo? When will this happen? When will relations between Cairo and both Damascus and Tripoli be resumed and ambassadors exchanged?

['Abd-al-Majid] God willing, everything will happen at the proper time, and the first step always promises good results.

[UKTUBAR] What will the position of the Libyan pilots who recently took refuge in Egypt be in the event relations are resumed between Egypt and Libya?

['Abd-al-Majid] Most of them had requested political asylum, and Egypt always respects the right to political asylum as stipulated by the Egyptian constitution.

[UKTUBAR] What about reestablishing the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, especially since the 1978 Baghdad summit resolution was of two parts. The first was on suspending Egypt's Arab League membership and the second on transferring the Arab League headquarters from Egypt to Tunisia. Now that the suspension of Egypt's membership has been terminated, some believe the second part should be implemented, as the resolution was an integrated one.

['Abd-al-Majid] It is premature to talk about that at the moment. It will be discussed at the right time.

[UKTUBAR] But I would like to remind you of your past opinion which you announced before the U.S. Foundation for Political Research [as published] that the transfer of the Arab League headquarters from Cairo to Tunis was illegal.

['Abd-al-Majid] There is no doubt that the Egyptian legal stand on this issue was clear and correct, but we will discuss it with the Arab states with a spirit of amity and brotherhood.

[UKTUBAR] What is the fate of the Egyptians working at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo? Who will guarantee their rights?

['Abd-al-Majid] We are very keen on protecting the rights of the Egyptian and Arab employees who continued to work at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo or at the other organizations.

[UKTUBAR] How do you propose to amend the Arab League Charter in light of the recent political developments? Do you support the majority principle rather than the unanimity principle?

['Abd-al-Majid] This is possible. In fact, the majority principle is the best and most realistic one in these matters because it can put an end to one country's attempts to hamper resolutions by using a veto.

[UKTUBAR] How do you view the Collective Arab Defense Pact? Does it conflict with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty?

[Abd-al-Majid] There is no conflict. These matters are clear and Egypt completely abides by its international commitments. [passage omitted]

[UKTUBAR] How can the Iraqi-Iranian problem be solved, especially after the Iranian foreign minister's statement on the Casablanca summit conference—a statement which described the summit's resolution stressing Iraq's sovereignty over Shatt al-'Arab as null and an interference in Iran's domestic affairs? Do you believe that the statement will further complicate the solution to this chronic problem?

[Abd-al-Majid] I can say that we have taken a clear-cut position in support of Iraq. Iraq gets every support from the Arab countries, and we appeal to Iran to respond to the peace negotiations and put an end to the current situation in the Arabian Gulf region.

[UKTUBAR] What about the Egyptian prisoners of war in Iran?

[Abd-al-Majid] The problem of the Egyptian, Iraqi, or other prisoners of war will certainly be solved. Iran has refused to hand the prisoners through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

[UKTUBAR] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has said that the Lebanese problem has one of two options: The first is the withdrawal of the Syrian and Israeli forces from Lebanon, in which case the Arabs will place Syria on an equal footing with Israel, and the second option is that Syria will continue to play its role in Lebanon until the establishment of a legitimate government and constitutional institutions in Lebanon. What is your opinion?

[Abd-al-Majid] In fact, Lebanon's problem is very serious. It is a real tragedy. Egypt's position from the beginning was: Take your hands off Lebanon. The Arabs had to unify their positions to end the bloodshed. Therefore, the six-member Arab committee was formed and a cease-fire was achieved. Egypt supported both moves. Then the issue was referred to the Arab summit conference, which adopted a positive resolution to end the Lebanese crisis.

A three-man Arab committee consisting of His Majesty King Hassan II, His Majesty King Fahd, and President Chadli Bendjedid was set up. The committee was given full powers to discuss the Lebanese problem. We hope that this committee will restore the constitutional government in Lebanon through the election of a president and a government to exercise full sovereignty over Lebanon. I believe that the current circumstances are

more suitable now. Undoubtedly, Syria has a responsibility in this regard, and I believe that the Syrians are aware of this responsibility and this development in dealing with the Lebanese problem.

[UKTUBAR] Some people believe that the Egyptian-Syrian rapprochement is an attempt to change the Egyptian viewpoint vis-a-vis the Lebanese problem. What is the Egyptian stand on the presence of 40,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon under the command of Syrian Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an, although these forces entered into Lebanon under a legitimate umbrella when the Arab League Council decided to dispatch deterrent forces?

[Abd-al-Majid] President Husni Mubarak expressed his opinion on this in his address. The resolutions adopted by the summit in Casablanca also defined the development in this stand. I also believe that the nature of the problem has changed in the wake of the Casablanca summit resolution. Syria's responsibility is to cooperate with the tripartite committee in resolving the problem.

[UKTUBAR] How do you view Lebanese Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss' agreement on the summit resolution concerning Lebanon, as he expressed his full readiness to cooperate to render the resolutions a success? And do you believe that the stand of Michel 'Awn, chairman of the military government, represented by his refrain from supporting the summit resolution until now, will constitute an obstacle to solving the problem?

[Abd-al-Majid] I do not believe that this stand will be an obstacle. However, we must give the officials in Lebanon time to hold contacts and make studies. We also should give the tripartite committee the opportunity to embark on its work.

[UKTUBAR] Dr 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid: As a result of one of your prominent political roles, Yasir 'Arafat was invited to deliver a speech at the UN General Assembly in September 1974 and the PLO was given the seat of a permanent representative at the United Nations. Do you believe that the road is now paved to embark on negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question?

[Abd-al-Majid] 'Arafat expressed the committed Palestinian stand when he delivered his famous address in 1974. And then, the picture became clear. A major development appeared in the Palestinian stand in the Palestine National Council session in Algiers in November 1988. After the Algiers statement, the UN General Assembly unanimously voiced support for the Palestine question in December 1988. Immediately after this, the American-Palestinian dialogue began and is still continuing in Tunis.

The international conference needs preparation, as it is undoubtedly one of the major methods to resolve the Palestinian problem. I believe that this conference does not need much time to be convened.

[UKTUBAR] Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid: The foreign ministers of the two superpowers exerted intensive efforts vis-a-vis the international conference. Murphy and Milkyanov [last name as published] exerted efforts in the past and now Baker and Shevardnadze are exerting efforts to this effect. Will the foreign ministers of the two superpowers continue to discuss the issue of the international conference in the future until it convenes?

['Abd-al-Majid] I value what you are saying. However, we cannot deny the fundamental development in the Palestine question. And this is something only recognized since November 1988—that is, before the end of 1 year. I can say that the situation now is different than before. It might take a long time before the conference convenes, but the parties should work as if the conference will begin tomorrow. We should work as if the conference will begin tomorrow because the recent changes did not exist before. I believe that you should agree with me on this.

[UKTUBAR] Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze proposed to U.S. Secretary of State Baker in Moscow a quadripartite meeting including the United States, the Soviet Union, the Palestinians, and the Israelis. What does the Egyptian administration think about such a proposal?

['Abd-al-Majid] The Soviet Union is exerting appreciated efforts and showing great readiness to participate in the solution. However, there is no doubt that the solution lies first and foremost with the Palestinian brothers.

[UKTUBAR] What is your opinion on Shamir's peace plan of elections which led to divisions inside Israel itself? Can you imagine a possibility of holding democratic and free elections under a military occupation which is practicing the worst measures of oppression and killing women and children everyday?

['Abd-al-Majid] There is no doubt that the idea of elections is a sound democratic idea. However, we have to know all the conditions under which the elections will be held. We have to remain fully neutral and make sure the aims of elections are defined. There must be a just and comprehensive solution which gives the Palestinian people the right to self-determination. This is clearly Egypt's stand.

[UKTUBAR] Do you believe that the U.S. Administration is serious in everything that has to do with the Palestine question, especially after George Bush informed Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in their meeting in Washington of his deep concern over the escalating oppression measures against the Palestinians,

or are they merely statements to calm people down in light of an Arab unanimous agreement which could issue resolutions to inflame the intifadah?

['Abd-al-Majid] In reality, I believe that the U.S. Administration has played positive roles. Firstly, the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue started under the old administration and continues under the new administration. In the U.S. secretary of state's last statement, he said that Israel has to get rid of the fantasy of greater Israel. We welcomed this important statement. Before that, President Bush, in the presence of President Mubarak during his last visit to Washington, declared that the Israeli occupation must end and land must be traded for peace. All these are positive signs in the U.S. Administration which we consider very important.

SLP Leader Discusses Party Conflict, Conference Events

45040307A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI in Arabic
3 Apr 89 pp 46-49

[Interview with Ahmad Mujahid, former deputy chairman of Socialist Labor Party, by 'Abd-al-'Azim Darwish, under "Papers From the Opposition" rubric; date and place not given; first paragraph is AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI introduction]

[Excerpts] The problem of the violent events that the Socialist Labor Party [SLP] recently witnessed has two sides, each exchanging accusations with the other through a war of press conferences that the two sides have chosen as the battlefield for their fight. Also, 'Adil Husayn, editor-in-chief of AL-SHA'B, known in SLP party circles as architect of the alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood, had his say in the previous issue. For these reasons, "Papers From the Opposition" today publishes the text of an interview conducted with Mr Ahmad Mujahid at the height of the crisis about 9 days ago. Before the recent elections, Mr Mujahid was the party's deputy chairman, and his supporters describe him as leader of the genuine socialist wing of the SLP. "Papers From the Opposition" publishes this interview without any interference either by suppression or addition. Let us begin the interview.

I Never Praised the Honesty of the Elections

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] On 10 March, the day activities of the SLP's general convention ended, Ahmad Mujahid stood before the members of the convention to affirm (the speech has been recorded) the honesty of the elections in which he lost his seat on the party's executive committee. Public opinion was subsequently surprised when Ahmad Mujahid announced his skepticism about these elections and pointed to certain "appearances" of fraud that had dominated them. How do you explain to us these two contradictory positions?

[Mujahid] The report about my having affirmed the honesty of the elections is untrue. That never happened. What did happen was that I affirmed the honesty of the election supervisor, who is a fellow lawyer, party member, and a fighter with a long history. I do not imagine that he would intentionally falsify or make any improper changes in the elections. I announced that this result had come as a natural result of the preparation that had preceded it. My skepticism about the preparation is explained by the challenge I presented to the chairman of the elections committee before the results were announced—during the election procedure, to be more exact. The position or opinion is explained by the written challenge presented concerning the elections, the selections [of local party apparatus] that preceded them, and what accompanied them on the actual day of the election. This I knew even after my standing up at the convention after the elections. Many people presented additional challenges to me, either oral ones, which I call "observations," or written ones.

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] You mentioned that you submitted a challenge, as you called it, concerning what happened the day of the elections and preceding them. What did the challenge contain? Did it state the number of districts whose selections you say were falsified?

[Mujahid] Selections for more than one committee were falsified: al-Minya, al-Jizah, al-Sharqiyah, al-Qalyubiyah, Cairo, and Alexandria.

Party Selections Falsified in 7 Governorates

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] Then you say that selections for 6 out of 24 governorates in which SLP organizations exist were falsified. Do you think these 6 selections, which you say were falsified, had any effect on altering the outcome of the executive committee elections?

[Mujahid] Certainly. I also add the selections that took place in Alexandria. These selections had a great effect, because they were big governorates with weight in the elections. For example, the Red Sea Governorate has 51 members in the convention. Al-Sharqiyah's falsified membership amounted to over 200. This means that al-Sharqiyah Governorate, for example, equals three governorates such as the Red Sea, or seven governorates such as Marsa Matruh. The selections of some governorates possess concentration [kathafah], while those of other governorates possess less concentration. Governorates with great weight as regards votes do in fact influence the result of the elections. In addition, there were ballots being given to some people before the election committees. I was informed about this afterwards—for a reason I am embarrassed to mention, which is that I went home from exhaustion and slept until the morning.

4 Indications of Selection Fraud

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] According to SLP rules, you had the right as party deputy chairman to head the general convention preparation committee in the absence of the party chairman. This was the committee charged with certifying the results of party apparatus selections in the governorates, which you say were falsified. Why did you keep silent in the face of this fraud that you assert? Why did you participate in the convention's activities, knowing, as you say you did, about this fraud that had preceded the activities of the convention?

[Mujahid] It is not true to say that I was head of the preparation committee for the elections. The head of the committee is the party chairman. I used to take his place in his absence. That is on the one hand; on the other hand, the falsified selections took place behind the back of the preparation committee. They took place in the final days, when the preparation committee was not meeting regularly, or at least in full strength. [passage omitted]

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] You mentioned that you knew at the time of the elections that instances of fraud had taken place during the balloting. Wasn't that enough for you not to comment in praise of the honesty of the elections?

[Mujahid] I state again that my words before the convention have not been understood. I was facing a convention where I didn't know who was with me and who was not. I wanted to convey to the convention everything I felt, and so I forgot about choosing words that would be understood 2 or 3 minutes later or after the end of the convention. That is what happened. I wanted to praise the honesty of the committee chairman, because he was a friend and I could not entertain doubts about him. However, I said that the result was natural, given the preparation that had preceded it. I meant the advance preparation of falsifications. Information may possibly have been suppressed. Confirmation of what I have said lies in the fact that I submitted a written challenge to the honesty of the elections. How could I submit a written challenge and then stand on the podium to contradict myself? It makes no sense to say that.

Not a Sit-in, but Completing the Convention

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] Then you admit that you submitted a written challenge. Why didn't you content yourself with that course of action, which agrees with party rules, instead of waiting for what the probable investigations of that challenge by the party chairman and leadership might uncover, and why did you come to sit in with your friends and supporters in SLP headquarters in Hada'iq al-Qubbah.

[Mujahid] The reason for our presence at party headquarters in Hada'iq al-Qubbah (what some call a sit-in, although in my opinion it was a continuing presence or a

state of continued convening of the party, not a sit-in—the reason is merely to take steps to protect the building of our party, so as to enable our men to do their job. The reason springs from the fact that the convention was illegally adjourned in violation of the rules. Responsibility for protecting the convention's continuance and enabling it to complete its agenda and debate the papers submitted to it was thus placed upon the members of the convention themselves, of whom I was one. That is what made us behave in this way. Had the convention convened and discussed party president Engineer Ibrahim Shukri's speech, and had papers been presented and debated, we would have ended with recommendations that might have clarified, amended, or cancelled Eng Ibrahim Shukri's speech. We might have reached the point of forming a committee for immediate investigation of the elections and the fraud that had infected them. We might have gone even further, leaving the membership of the executive committee in abeyance until completion of the investigations. We are here as a reaction to the attack on the rules and the attack on the convention.

What Happened Represents an Invasion From Outside Aiming To Change the Party's Composition

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] After the convention, Ahmad Mujahid described the convention results as representing a revolution in party attitudes and said that the party had turned into a religious party. On what basis do you level this charge of yours at the party, possibly exposing it to dissolution by the Parties Committee, since the Parties Act forbids the formation of political parties on a religious or sectarian basis?

[Mujahid] On the one hand, the SLP was established under the Parties Act; on the other hand, it is based on the constitution of Egypt. Included in its program are adherence to religion and virtue, along with Islamic Shari'ah, as a fundamental source of legislation. In this, additionally, the program accords with the constitution, which specifies that Islamic Shari'ah is the principal source of legislation. Thus, the established program was established on Islamic principles and is not inconsistent with Islam. On the one hand, it is based on the constitution, which embraces and comprehends all organizations, every political movement, and all legislation within Egypt. On the other hand, it is based on the preamble to the party program. I therefore support this program—an Islamic program. It does not conflict with the constitution; it does not conflict with the Parties Act; it does not conflict with Islamic Shari'ah, which is the control and the source of all legislation whatsoever in our society. So here is the question. What is new in that? I say that what made us suspicious was that Eng Ibrahim Shukri announced in his speech before the convention that the party in effect had religious people in it and worldly people, or "secularists," as he called them. That surprised everyone. Afterwards, we began discussing among ourselves what he meant by worldly people and

what he meant by secularists. These are learned, educated terms that can be taken in a broad sense or narrowly, and this put us into a state of perplexity. However, he could only be interpreted as meaning the real socialists present inside the party and believing in its program. When he announced that there were two sides, that meant that there was another, new, intruding force that had come upon the original party, and that the party's original members had become strangers to it. Also, he announced that he and his colleague, Dr Muhammad Hilmi Murad, were aligned with the religious people in confronting those whom he named secularists and worldly people. We interpreted this as being an invasion of the party from outside to change its content and concepts—an external invasion whose aim was to expel all the elements that had joined the party, believed in its program, and worked to implement it. That is the picture that emerged in our minds. So we moved to defend the SLP's program as a definite Islamic formula, and not an indefinite Islamic formula for organizing society.

There is an enormous difference here, both as regards the view of social justice and as regards the view of the economic method that can be applied in society. As is well-known, regarding matters of this world, the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said, "You are more knowledgeable about your worldly affairs." Independent judgments about these affairs never end. The compass that guides them is public interest [maslahah], whether the broad interest of the masses, which is what we believe in, or the interest of a class or narrow group, which is what others believe in and what we do not believe in. The one is Islamic, and the other is also Islamic. We believe that the socialist formula in the SLP's program is one that serves the broad masses and is not opposed to Islam. It would be wrong and dangerous to set Islam in opposition to socialism. Islam is a whole, and socialism is a part; and the part cannot be made equal to the whole. Socialism—how often I say this now!—is merely a formula or an independent Islamic interpretation. It does not contradict Islam. On the contrary, it strengthens Islam, as can be proved both by Qur'anic verses and practical application since the days of the Prophet or [the Caliph] 'Umar. I could quote many things here. This formula is one we have chosen to be a practical application of Islamic justice, to provide a better life for people in Islam. We firmly believe that the worship of God always translates into righteous action. There is no Qur'anic verse in which faith is separated from righteous action.

Faith is something in the heart. No one but God, may He be praised and exalted, can see it or judge it. Righteous action is something before us all. We all participate in it. We can judge each other, without there being [word missing]. The saying of the Prophet, "Have you opened his heart to find out the truth?" is well-known. We can judge people from the outside; we cannot judge them by what goes on deep inside them. We therefore believe that righteous action is the real translation of faith. Our role

here is to translate this righteous action into a path and a definite method. Leaving it at the level of generality of Islam would allow control by those who rule in the name of Islam and are pushing the country toward what we do not approve and what God does not approve, things that may lead to violations and even crimes against Islam. We have recent experiences before us: al-Numayri in the Sudan, Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan, and others.

Yes, Islam Is the Solution.

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] In light of your rejection, as you just explained, of having the slogan of Islam in its entirety raised as an alternative to the political program of any party, do you have any explanation for your previous agreement to enter the April 1987 People's Assembly elections under the slogan, "Islam is the solution?" That is the slogan the party raised after its alliance with the Brotherhood. You were one of those who approved it.

[Mujahid] In the sense I just mentioned, Islam can indeed become the solution. The issue here is what independent interpretation we can deduce from Islam to confront present circumstances. This is what I meant by the SLP's program being "an Islamic solution." What I object to and oppose is conformity to a mere slogan without clarity in application or in confronting our circumstances and creating an alternative to what we reject.

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] But SLP leaders chose to raise the slogan, "Islam is the solution," during these elections without finding out in detail what they were aiming at beyond this slogan. Doesn't this mean that they were satisfied with the slogan without translating it into a definite program of action?

[Mujahid] This is a question I have answered. The slogan symbolizes that our program is an Islamic one based on Islam or built on it. Thus, when we say that Islam is the solution, I can mean by it—as an explanation of it there may be reflected in my mind—that my program is the solution. Another conception or program may be reflected as the solution in the mind of others. That is the point.

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] During the press conference war that the two sides decided to enter, Eng Ibrahim Shukri announced at one of his press conferences that what happened at the fifth general convention and caused this storm was not strange. At the fourth general convention 2 years ago, he had presented a concept paper pointing out that direction that the SLP chose, meaning that there was no sudden transformation in the party's attitudes. What do you say in response to that?

[Mujahid] I think the only answer is what I mentioned previously. The program and method under which we operate and which we are working to implement is, in my view and that of my other colleagues, even the Christian

ones, Islamic in source—though it is not religious, but political. If it is, as some of my Christian colleagues think, and if it is Islamic in source because it realizes the justice we seek, as well as security, safety, freedom, respect for man, faith in science, improvement and development of life, etc.—then by this token anything said about Islamicness applies to our program. However, the new development has divided the party into two parts: one religious, the other nonreligious. One part is called Islamic, the other secular and worldly. Thus the party is divided into two halves, even though it is a single party in which Christian and Muslim think alike and enjoy the equality that the program envisions. Although the freedom that the program achieves or works to achieve is Islamic in inspiration, it does not assume a religious formulation. That is the difference. When I say today that the party has been transformed from a socialist party into a religious Islamic party, here I have translated sectarianism and membership into a reality. This creates an atmosphere for sectarian strife, thus threatening the social peace we all seek, and possibly pushing the country into what some other countries have been pushed.

Counting Took Place Away From Any Surveillance

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] Some assert that what happened during the fifth general convention was a political fight in which one faction succeeded in removing the other faction.

[Mujahid] That was how Eng Ibrahim Shukri expressed it when he said that we had been preparing for a year and a half for the conclusion we reached. I would assert that in spite of all the preparations they made, about 10 days before the elections the broad base did not support them. What tipped the scale was the fraud they added, consisting of people with no relation to the party, tampering with membership cards that we discovered only after the elections, and what the matter of the vote count may uncover. I did not see the counting procedures, but I imagined that there was someone monitoring them. As I mentioned, I went home to sleep because of exhaustion, but I learned that the counting had taken place without any surveillance. Again I repeat, to silence the others, that I never doubted the honesty of Salah al-Qafasi.

Publishing Another Newspaper Is the Alternative

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] About 2 years ago, when the SLP alliance with the Brotherhood was announced, there began to be evidence of intensive efforts by prominent figures in the religious tendency to remove prominent socialists. These attempts found expression on the pages of AL-SHA'B newspaper. Where were you all this time, during which you were deputy party chairman?

[Mujahid] We tried to keep AL-SHA'B from being a single pulpit. We wanted it to become only an intellectual pulpit carrying out its real mission, which is to follow political events and problems of the masses and

all the other tasks of a party newspaper. We talked orally. Then we resolved in the executive committee to remove 'Adil Husayn, as he himself has mentioned. However, Eng Ibrahim Shukri set his own resignation in opposition to implementation of this resolution. We did not want the party torn apart, since in all our minds Eng Ibrahim Shukri has standing deserving respect. So our minds immediately turned to publishing another newspaper. I spoke first with Eng Ibrahim Shukri, and he agreed with me. But later, when I raised the subject with the staff of the party office, and the staff agreed, Eng Shukri said he had not agreed. He said things that I considered a slur against me personally, when he said that the attitudes of any paper published in Cyprus were well known. Professor Fu'ad Hadiyah replied to him that the newspaper would be published in Cairo, not Cyprus; that just as more than one newspaper is published in the Liberal Party, so we could publish more than one newspaper to carry out their party mission. Eng Shukri asked that a feasibility study on the publication of the newspaper be prepared. Colleague Hamid Zaydan, former editor-in-chief of AL-SHA'B, actually prepared the study. Subsequently, Hamid Zaydan informed me that Eng Shukri said that if the newspaper were published, a conflict between the two newspapers would occur and that this would lead to the enfeeblement of both. That is where the matter ended. A written request for discussion of the application for the newspaper was presented to Eng Shukri in the high committee, but this application has not been discussed to date. By nature, I am not fond of impractical or protest positions. I incline toward practical positions. My protest against the newspaper was that another newspaper should be published. At the same time, I was going along with all the bases without exception, which were not pleased with the newspaper's policy. When I say that they were not pleased with the newspaper's policy, that does not mean that I would shut the door to those who were allied with us. No, but it should be in proportion, on the one hand; and without neglecting the problems of the masses, on the other hand. As is well known, the newspaper's policy was reflected in an appalling drop in circulation.

No, I Did Not Write for the Newspaper, and Yet...

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] In a face-to-face interview, 'Adil Husayn, editor-in-chief of AL-SHA'B, completely denied that any prominent figure of the socialist tendency or "the other side," as he put it, presented anything to him—article or viewpoint—that he refused to publish. Moreover, he challenged any leadership member to show any article he had prevented from being published.

[Mujahid] I personally announced in the newspaper's managing board and in the executive committee that I would not write, although I wanted what I was doing to be written about. This was so that I would not turn from a political fighter into a political writer, or from someone engaged in public activity into a thinker. The movement or militant political activity needs action more than

words. It needs meeting and contact with the masses with the goal of moving political life in the direction that accords with the public interest, on the one hand, and with our program, on the other hand. Thus the intensity of my activity. As is well-known, this was not announced; rather, there was an intention to hide it. This is my reply.

[AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI] In this context, 'Adil Husayn also said, "The other side is trying to portray the disagreement between them and us as an intellectual and ideological disagreement. The truth is otherwise. The other side has no thought, or even the ability to carry on any dialogue with us. The proof is that we used to silence them completely whenever any issue was discussed in a meeting of the executive committee." How do you respond?

[Mujahid] Such talk can be answered in one sentence: I am not responsible for 'Adil Husayn's case of narcissism.

Former Al-Jizah Governor Indicted for Illicit Gain
JN2505141189 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic
23 May 89 p 1

[By 'Ali 'Afifi]

[Text] The Illicit Gain Board has decided to refer to the Criminal Court the case of former al-Jizah Governor Dr 'Abd-al-Hamid Hasan on charges of illegal possession of funds. Attorney Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ghannam, assistant justice minister for illicit gain affairs, made the decision. A decision was made earlier prohibiting him and his wife from using their funds as well as the funds of their underage children.

The investigations conducted by the board's judicial committee since October have proved that the former governor used his position to secure illicit gain.

AL-AKHBAR has learned that the indictment sent to the Court of Appeals in Cairo asking it to fix a date for a session before the pertinent court, the al-Jizah Criminal Court, states that Dr 'Abd-al-Hamid Hasan has made ½ million pounds in illicit gains and that he has failed to name the source of this wealth during interrogation.

AL-AKHBAR also learned that, of the property placed under custody in the case are four apartments, three of which are registered in his own name, while the fourth is registered using his wife's name. These apartments are located in al-Zamalik and al-Ma'adi.

Information Minister on New Media Projects
JN0606152689 Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic
4 Jun 89 p 13

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister Safwat al-Sharif by Ayman Kamal; date, place not given]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Kamal] After the restoration of its Arab League membership, what role will Egypt play through the Arab satellite and what contribution will it make to the performance of this satellite on the Arab level?

[al-Sharif] Egypt's return to the Arab League by common Arab consent necessitates that its media further intensify their inclination toward the Arab region in order to serve its people.

As for the Arab satellite and Egypt's role, I here announce that during the visit to Egypt by King Fahd, the custodian of the two holy mosques, he sponsored the establishment of the Egyptian ground Arab satellite station. The cost is estimated at \$5 billion, and the station will provide radio and television services.

We have a ground station for the Indian satellite, and through this station we carry out media exchange—broadcasting important Arab events and cultural occasions to the Arab region.

Our pioneering media will also have their role through the Arab satellite under the new Arab information strategy, which aims at closing Arab ranks and achieving Arab solidarity through clear and powerful information policy.

[Kamal] The sixth media men's day comes this year amid a new democratic climate embodied in the freedom of the audio and visual world. What new plans does the Egyptian media have on the local and Arab levels?

[al-Sharif] The Egyptian media have played their role in deepening the democracy. They also played their role in adopting the political and social issues of the society, foremost of which are the issues of population, extremism, and drugs.

The Egyptian information [ministry] also accomplished the giant project in southern Sinai of building relay and transmission stations up to Tabah. This enabled the entire world to see the great event—the liberation of Tabah, its return to Egyptian sovereignty, and President Mubarak's call for peace.

Also this year, television transmission reached Barnis (south of the Red Sea), allowing a wider coverage area on the Egyptian territories. Transmission even went beyond the border and is received in Saudi Arabia and the Yemen Arab Republic. The transmission of the fourth channel at the canal area, which serves three governorates—Port Sa'id, Ismailiyah, and Suez—will reach the Eastern governorate as a new service by the local media.

Currently, there are studies to build and inaugurate the fifth television channel in Alexandria to serve the local community. This is part of the 5-year plan. The implementation will begin with the introduction of the new budget, and the capabilities of the Alexandria radio station will be used.

Next year, two radio stations will be opened in Marsa Matruh and al-Wadi al-Jadid. They will serve the local community and handle its problems and concerns.

Work at the new production city project will begin on 6 October after the agreement of the committees of policies and investment. The radio and television corporation has shares in this project worth of the value of the land and the premises. It is a huge information project that will soon enter into service. Our modern information undoubtedly is able to give. It is working under the shadow of a democratic climate and free expression.

Memo Calls for Exempting Stocks From Taxes
JN0706194589 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
6 Jun 89 p 4

[By Suhayr Abu-al-'Ula]

[Excerpt] The Financial Market Board is studying the memorandum presented by the Cairo Stock Exchange, in which it requested that securities be completely exempted from the general revenue tax, as is the case with bank savings. The purpose is to encourage investment in securities following the hike in bank deposit interest rates that caused investors to refrain from dealing with stocks, as bank savings are fully exempted from taxes. [passage omitted]

Dollar Value Increase Expected
45040284A London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic
27 Mar 89 pp 32-33

[Article by 'Abd-al-Qadir Shahib: "Expected to Hit Three Pounds: Egyptian Dollar Gone Crazy!"]

[Text] In the course of 10 weeks the American dollar in Egypt has gone crazy. Its value jumped by 12 percent to the current rate of 270 Egyptian piasters and some expect it to keep going up to break the 3-pound barrier just as it broke the 2-pound barrier prior to that.

This is the highest rise in the price of the dollar inside the black market in Egypt since the creation of the official free market which the banks entered as foreign currency buyers.

Therefore, the Central Bank was forced to adjust the price of the dollar in the official free market more than once during these few weeks, raising it by about 7 piasters to the current rate of 241 piasters. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the black market price and the official price is still great, amounting to 30 piasters while, up until a few weeks ago, it did not exceed 10 piasters and perhaps less than that.

This new surge in the price of the American dollar in Egypt began at the end of last year but did not raise any concern at the time among Egyptian economy officials who had grown accustomed to such surges at the end of each year owing to a squeeze brought about by a higher demand for the U.S. dollar and other foreign currencies on the part of businessmen, in particular, who have to meet their obligations to the banks and pay up their debts.

Yet this surge in the price of the dollar in the Egyptian market did not abate or stop, but kept rising higher and higher after the beginning of the new year, jumping in these few weeks to 270 piasters.

As a result, prices of a large number of imported goods went ablaze. Some estimates put the rate of increase in the first 5 weeks of the current year at no less than 5 percent.

This may have been one reason for the Egyptian government's hesitation to adopt any measures to adjust the Central Bank's rate of exchange for the Egyptian pound which is limited to 70 piasters for the dollar and is used to compute the prices of imported basic goods such as flour, wheat, and other subsidized items like sugar, oil, and tea and is also used to assess the prices of Suez Canal and oil proceeds.

Observers have noticed that this new surge of sudden increases that hit the dollar and the Egyptian pound, or the US dollar in Egypt, came at the heels of measures the Egyptian government adopted to impose discipline on investment companies and force them to comply with the law, exactly as happened with regard to the dollar in Egypt in the wake of the big banks case in which the then most famous currency dealer in Egypt, Sami 'Ali Hasan, was brought to trial, and the price of the dollar thereupon went ablaze, breaking the 2-pound barrier. The same thing is recurring now.

Observers have also noticed that this new wave of madness afflicting the Egyptian dollar came at a time when Egypt's foreign currency revenues were going up as remittances by Egyptians working abroad rose by 9 percent last year, revenues from tourism rose by 5 percent, and Egyptian oil export revenues improved as world prices improved. Consequently, from the time it was established up until today, or in the course of two years, the free market's foreign currency proceeds have soared to \$4.5 billion.

That is why some observers believe that this great hike in the price of the American dollar is not real but is caused by sharp Egyptian currency speculations by currency dealers in Egypt.

To corroborate their conclusions, these observers cite the refusal of money changers in the free zones, Port Sa'id in particular, to comply with the Egyptian government's request to observe an appropriate price for the US dollar not much higher than its free market posted price. Many big currency dealers transferred their activities to these areas, Port Sa'id in particular, after they were subjected to police pursuit in the early months of the free market's life.

Another group of Egyptian economists believe, however, that currency dealer speculations are not alone responsible for the soaring dollar prices in the Egyptian black market. There is also the foreign currency budget deficit

brought about by heavier foreign currency payments which increased revenues have failed to cover owing to the fact that steps to reschedule Egypt's foreign debts agreed upon between Egypt and a number of creditor countries have been blocked in the wake of the failure to arrive at an agreement between Egypt and the IMF.

Due to this growing deficit in the Egyptian foreign currency budget, many companies, institutions, and government agencies have turned to the black market to secure their foreign currency needs following the breakdown in the output structures, the rise in unemployment, and the consequent rise in the demand for currency in the black market. This gave money dealers the chance to speculate in the Egyptian pound and encouraged them to raise the price of the American dollar at this crazy rate. In other words, the deficit in foreign currency revenues provided the proper climate for money dealers to speculate in the Egyptian pound, the primary reason behind the (Egyptian) dollar's craziness.

Hence security pursuit of money dealers failed to put an end to speculation in the Egyptian pound and to stop the dollar in Egyptian markets from going crazy, despite the fact that these pursuits went as far as arresting several hundred money dealers.

Some economic analysts believe that running after the price of the dollar in the black market on the part of the Egyptian Central Bank will not save the Egyptian dollar from going crazy. For while the free market price has gone up 7 piasters, the black market price has gone up 30 piasters at one time.

These analysts call for the adoption of necessary measures to control foreign currency demands in the Egyptian market, especially since the potential for increasing foreign currency revenues is limited.

Two 'Biggest' Black Market Dealers Imprisoned
JN0506162589 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
4 Jun 89 p 11

[Text] Chancellor Hasan al-Sharbini, first public prosecutor for financial, commercial, and tax affairs, has ordered the imprisonment of Sami 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Abdallah, Egypt's biggest money dealer and owner of an import and export office, and 'Ali 'Abd-al-'Al Ramadan, accountant, for 4 days pending investigation. They are accused of dealing with foreign currency in the black market, which affects the national economy.

The investigations made by Usamah al-'Ashri, head of the prosecution, disclosed that the defendants are the biggest money dealers in Egypt and that they control the rise of the dollar in the black market.

Court Sentences Drug Smugglers to Death

JN0706112589 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic
5 Jun 89 pp 1, 2

[By 'Abdallah Dayf]

[Excerpt] Suez—After winning the approval of his eminence the mufti, the Suez criminal court has unanimously sentenced 19 people of 5 nationalities to death by hanging for involvement in a large-scale drug smuggling operation. Six of them are at large. The figure does not include any Egyptian citizen. The court also decided to impose a fine of 10,000 pounds on each of them and to confiscate the ship "Riva Star" [name as published], which was used by the smugglers in their operation. The defendants were captured aboard the ship in the Gulf of Suez last July while they were trying to smuggle into Egypt and some European countries a large quantity of drugs, hashish, and opium valued at approximately 1 billion pounds. [passage omitted]

Ambassador to Riyadh Speaks on Regional Issues

45040284B London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
31 Mar 89 p 23

[Interview with Qasim al-Masri: "Fahd's Talks Came at Positive Time in Support of Peace and Cooperation"; date and place not specified]

[Text] On the occasion of the historic visit which the Custodian of the Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, made to Cairo last Saturday, the Egyptian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Qasim al-Masri, talked about the visit's significance and results pertaining to the strengthening of bilateral relations and joint agreements. He also talked about other matters raised in the Arab arena.

Mr Qasim al-Masri, the Egyptian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, told AL-HAWADITH that "all of Egypt, government and people, received the Custodian of the Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, with great joy and keen interest. Coordination at the highest levels took place between the leaders of the two fraternal peoples. There is no doubt that coordination among the leaders is one of the most successful means of bolstering cooperation and cementing relations between the two countries. Communication at the summit level is one of the most important diplomatic tools of this modern age that has made such communication easier."

The ambassador expressed the appreciation of Egypt, government and people alike, of the Saudi monarch's visit to his second country, which presented a chance to exchange opinions and to strengthen the close fraternal relations between the two countries. It also resulted in a number of agreements such as the economic, investment, technical, and trade cooperation agreement that allows for the exchange of customs privileges; exempts agricultural, food, and animal goods from customs duties; removes non-customs barriers; and facilitates the

movement of people and capital and all sorts of communications between the two fraternal nations, including land transport projects aimed at regulating the operation of passenger and freight buses and at supporting maritime transport and operating more maritime lines such as a regular shipping line and a ferry line. The agreement will also include many facets of cooperation and will result in many other subagreements regulating relations in various fields such as an investment guarantee agreement, a capital transfer agreement, and an agreement to facilitate the movement of people.

[AL-HAWADITH] What is your assessment of the meeting between King Fahd and President Mubarak?

[Al-Masri] The meeting of the two leaders came at a positive and optimistic time in the Arab world which, God willing, will help to forge a just and comprehensive peace in the area. For Egypt has resumed relations with almost all Arab countries, the Iraq-Iran war has come to an end, bright political climates prevail over the Arab Maghreb now that the Sahara problem is moving toward relaxation in the Islamic framework, and Soviet troops have completely pulled out from Islamic Afghanistan and the Muhajidun have taken their seat in the Islamic Conference Organization.

At the global level, the world is moving toward detente, agreement, communication, and conciliation. This has had great impact on the relaxation of chronic regional issues in the world. The most important development is that which occurred in the Palestinian issue by virtue of the courageous uprising and the resultant active, circumspect, and wise action by the PLO under the leadership of Abu-'Ammar, thus earning the support of world public opinion without changing or relinquishing the Palestinian cause's basic principles or the constants of the struggle. The PNC [Palestine National Council] in Algiers issued basic documents that have been met with worldwide acceptance, that are a great pressure tool against Israel, and that have led to the start of the Palestinian-American dialogue. In light of these positives, the meeting of the two great leaders yielded another set of important political resolutions in the interest of the central Arab issue as part of the efforts to push for holding an international peace conference with a view to establishing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, dealing with the situation in Lebanon, and consolidating peace in the Gulf region between Iraq and Iran. This is in addition to other Arab and international issues that fall within the scope of the two countries' concerns.

[AL-HAWADITH] What is the present Egyptian position on supporting the PLO at all the various levels, vis-a-vis the Palestinian-American dialogue in particular?

[Al-Masri] Egyptian support of the Palestinian cause has not stopped at any level, both in war and peace and in negotiations, diplomatic initiatives, and the media.

Egypt has devoted all its human, political, economic, and media capabilities to the service of the Palestinian cause, the primary cause of the Arabs and the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is no argument that Egyptian-Palestinian coordination is being conducted at all planes and levels, and at the highest level. When Jordan made its decision to disengage from the West Bank and the PLO began thinking of declaring a Palestinian state and a temporary government, the organization turned to Egypt for legal counsel. Egyptian legal advisors studied this decision in its positive and negative aspects. There was coordination before, during, and after the decision was taken. The Palestinian brothers are kept apprised of all the details of Egyptian action, and Egypt occupies a unique place in political action. It can talk to Israel, to America, to the Soviet Union, to Europe, to the Arab and Islamic world, and to all other parties. Therefore, it has much to offer in support of the Palestinian cause.

[AL-HAWADITH] What were the results of President Mubarak's visit to Europe and what was the purpose of his upcoming visit to the United States?

[Al-Masri] The Palestinian cause is the primary concern in discussions and contacts during the president's tours to Europe, America, or any other country. There is no doubt that the recent European trip aimed at asking for an effective European role in the Palestinian issue because we believe that Mediterranean security is an integral part of European security. We have worked to persuade Europe that it cannot live in peace without the stability of the Arab region. Europe has taken remarkable steps toward the Palestinian cause and is now an active partner in the search for peace in the Middle East. A few weeks prior to the president's visit, the foreign ministers of France, Spain and Greece visited the area and submitted a positive report to the European community. Now is the opportunity to arrive at a just and honorable settlement to the Middle East conflict that guarantees the Palestinian people's right to set up an independent state on their national soil under the leadership of their legitimate representative, the PLO.

[AL-HAWADITH] Can you tell us how Egyptian diplomacy succeeded in overcoming recent Israeli obstacles to regain Taba without concessions?

[Al-Masri] All Arabs are to be congratulated on the return of Taba and the resumption of Egyptian sovereignty on its soil. It was a very simple matter: that Egypt did not and will not give up its sovereignty over one millimeter of its territory. This principle was the Egyptian negotiators' guiding light vis-a-vis Taba which is part of our beloved land and a part of the government's sovereignty and the Egyptian people's honor in terms of past and present history and heritage, because Egyptian sovereignty is above all other considerations. The Egyptian negotiator refused to jeopardize this sovereignty in any way. The other side proposed partnership formulas even in the management of the hotel, but the Egyptian

negotiator refused all proposals, for matters of sovereignty must not be jeopardized and no one has the right to waive them. President Mubarak has taken celebrated positions in this regard that have gone down in history with pride, honor, and admiration. Egyptian diplomacy has been successful in its endeavors, employing wisdom and objectivity and gaining for itself a legal standing worth teaching at universities as a model of how modern struggles are managed from all aspects. We are very happy about Taba's return to Egypt. I am also happy to note here, through AL-HAWADITH, the joy I sensed among the Saudi brothers, officials and citizens alike, that typifies genuine Arab national sentiment.

[AL-HAWADITH] With the declaration of the Arab Maghreb Union and the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] and before it the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], it appears that the Arabs are now moving toward peace rather than separation. How do you assess these two new union experiences?

[Al-Masri] I believe that the ACC was the first step on the proper path. No new project is born a giant; it has to go through a natural growing process. Europe, which is now moving toward political unity and a unified market in 1992, began its experience in this field very modestly in Italy in 1957 when a customs union agreement was signed. This union has now developed into a unified market, including unified currency and unified taxes, the removal of customs barriers, and the subsequent move toward political unity. We Arabs have lived through union experiences that began as giants from day one: a totally amalgamated union with one constitution, one government, and one policy that created a shock which administrative structures or even the public mood could not accept and the whole thing ended up in failure. As for the ACC experience, which I can talk about without the other two experiences—given the fact that my country is a council member—its present trend is to take perhaps slow but well-considered steps directed at the higher goal of comprehensive Arab unity. Actually, the GCC is the pioneer in this domain.

Students Arrested During Exams At Asyut University

*JN3005180089 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic
29 May 89 pp 1, 6*

[By Hamdi Shafiq]

[Text] Demonstrations have renewed at Asyut University over the past few days. Demonstrators protested arrest campaigns which took place against students who are members of the Islamic groups while they were taking their final exams. More than 2,000 students from the faculties of engineering, law, and medicine demonstrated to protest the storming of exam rooms at the university campus by the men of the state security intelligence service and the university guards. As a result, 29 students were arrested, including 'Abd-al-Akhir Ham-mad, leader of the Asyut group, while he was taking his

exam at the faculty of law at the university campus. Others were also arrested, including Ahmad 'Abduh Salim, deputy leader of the Asyut group. Clashes also erupted when the security forces tried to arrest Tal'at Yasin, one of the Islamic group's leaders, at the faculty of engineering. In the clash, students and officers fought with hands, chairs, and bricks. As a result, 15 students were arrested. More than 2,000 students also decided to stage a sit-in inside the university's housing complex until their colleagues are freed and allowed to take their exams.

Asyut Governor Major General 'Abd-al-Halim Musa issued strict instructions to the security commands in the Asyut Governorate to stop the arrest campaign against students taking their exams. University President 'Abd-al-Raziq Hasan also asked the university guards to preserve security at the various faculties during the exams and to prevent any clash with students, especially with members of the Islamic groups.

ROSE AL-YUSUF Investigates Shaykh 'Abd-Al-Rahman Arrest in Al-Fayyum

'Abd-Al-Rahman Role

45040336 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic
24 Apr 89 pp 4-6, 80

[Article by 'Abdallah Kamal, Hamdi Rizq, Usamah Salamah and 'Ilwani Mughib: "Because of this Man Policemen in al-Fayyum Do Not Sleep; Police Officers Say, 'As Long as He Remains in Prison, Everything Will Remain Calm, Nothing Will Happen;' al-Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman Describes Village Residents Who Greeted Him as Riffraff, Affirms, 'Members of the Grouping Party Are Godless Atheists Even Though They Fast and Pray'"]

[Text] "You are drawing me into something in which I have absolutely no interest. We hear about Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman in amusing stories which are related at night. Sometimes, we see his procession, and other times we read about him in newspapers." This statement, which was made by a resident of al-Fayyum, was made by many others. And yet, policemen in al-Fayyum remain totally preoccupied with the man. Although the director of security refuses to talk about him except through the ministry in Cairo, one of the officers in the province says, "All the policemen in the governorate have been entrusted with the task of keeping tabs on Dr 'Umar."

On Friday, the first day of Ramadan, Dr 'Umar stood amidst 600 worshipers and said, "Today, we will not object to anyone, and we will not vilify anyone." One of his followers asked, "Are you afraid, Shaykh 'Umar?" Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman replied, "No, but we are now in a holy month."

When one of the shaykh's followers whispered in his ear to inform him that a police officer was in the mosque, Dr 'Umar exclaimed with a sense of strong fanaticism, "There is a stinking smell in here." The officer sat down and prayed behind Dr 'Umar.

Notwithstanding Dr 'Umar's respect for the days of the holy month, his supporters gathered around him in front of the mosque after the prayer service, and they chanted, "There is no God but Allah, and Zaki Badr is the enemy of Allah!" They also chanted, "An Islamic government is what we want: not an eastern one or a western one."

Afterwards, the shaykh started his usual daily plea which was echoed by his followers. "O God, turn their wives into widows; orphan their children; and let the earth shake and tremble under their feet." Col Muhammad Sayf, police commissioner for al-Fayyum, the district capital, who had been stationed outside the door of the mosque, came inside the mosque and said, "This is enough, Dr 'Umar. Let us go home. The car is waiting to take you home." Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman replied, "I don't want anything from you, you filthy people." In the midst of a great deal of chaos and confusion the sound of a gunshot was heard, and the colonel was wounded in his foot.

Muhammad Mahmud, a grocer whose store is located on the same street where the mosque is located, said that he heard the colonel scream, but he could not determine who had fired the shot. Afterwards, a terrible battle broke out in which pocket knives and chains were used. Shots continued to be fired, and people threw stones at each other.

At that point the police were compelled to use tear gas. Stifled by the tear gas, people fled their homes to escape the smoke.

The investigative reports of the district attorney's office indicate that the only people who were injured were Col Muhammad Sayf, two soldiers and seven civilians. But Dr Lutfi Sulayman, president of the Association of Medical Professionals in al-Fayyum, affirms that more people were injured. He said that many people who were injured as a result of this battle were treated in physicians' offices in al-Fayyum. The injured had refused to go to government hospitals because they dreaded getting involved in the investigations. For example, an enlisted soldier whose name is Ashraf, was standing at some distance near the mosque waiting for transportation. He was struck near his right eye by a buckshot. The physician who treated his wound asked him not to tell the X-ray physician that he had received his injury in the mosque incident. She told him that he would not get involved in the investigations if he did not tell the X-ray physician.

Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and 42 of his followers were arrested; 23 of those who were arrested were held in prison, and the rest were released. The district attorney's

office ordered the arrest of 16 defendants who were fugitives, and last Thursday Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman was ordered held for another 15 days.

The Revenge

When questioned, Muhammad 'Id, a student in the College of Agriculture who had failed four times in two academic years, said that he had thrown bombs from the Ibshaway train to avenge Dr 'Umar's arrest. At 9:30 p.m. last Friday patrons of Qarun Coffee Shop, which is located in Station Square, were stunned by three consecutive explosions. One explosion occurred in front of 'Abd-al-Hamid movie theater; the other occurred behind the city cafeteria; and the third occurred in front of al-Fayyum police station.

The investigations of the district attorney's office indicate that no one was injured in the incident, but an employee of Qarun Coffee Shop says that the bomb which was thrown on the city cafeteria struck two students in their last year of school: one was to earn his diploma from the agricultural secondary school, and the other was to earn his from the industrial secondary school. The two had been sitting in the cafeteria which faces the coffee shop.

In accordance with orders from the district attorney's office, four defendants were arrested after this incident, and they were ordered held for 15 days.

On the same day 46 cars carrying police soldiers traveled to the village of Jarfis, in the administrative district of Markaz Sinnuris, which is 8 kilometers from al-Fayyum. According to the investigation, information had been received indicating that 17 members of the Islamic groups whose arrest had been ordered had set up their headquarters in that village and that large numbers of that group's members were in the village.

Twenty bombs were seized as a result of the search which was ordered by the district attorney's office. The police surrounded the place for the purpose of conducting a very thorough search of the premises and arresting the fugitives. But the policemen had to contend with a barrage of stones which were hurled at them from al-Tawhid Mosque. A bomb was thrown on members of the police force, and Lt Col Muhammad Zakhari was injured when someone threw a microphone at him. Two other soldiers were wounded: one sustained a head injury, the other, a foot injury; and the fugitives were arrested.

Fear reigns over the village, and no one is willing to talk about the groups or about the factory. However, it was a village resident who showed us three homes which had been burned down completely when three balls made of fabric, soaked in gas and already ignited were thrown on them. No one knows where these balls of fire came from.

The three homes which were burned to the ground were owned by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Maqsud, Fathi Abu Khalifah, and an Egyptian woman whose name is Masriyah.

Firefighting trucks could not enter the village to put out the fire until 6:30 a.m.

The Bomb and the Lamp

The bombs which were hurled from the Ibshaway train and the stones and tear gas bombs which filled the street where al-Shuhada' [Martyrs'] Mosque is located were not the first incidents. These incidents were preceded by many more.

An important point must be made here: Not one city official would talk to us. One public relations officer in the governorate advised us not to try again. He said all attempts to talk to city officials would fail.

However, one of the National Party's leaders, who holds a public relations position in al-Fayyum told us that the College of Education had invited the Variety Theater group to present a program in al-Fayyum early in March. When the group arrived in al-Fayyum, its members were met by a vehement demonstration which condemned art and artists. As the demonstrators traveled through the streets of al-Fayyum, sections of the program were being recorded in the college. Then there was a loud explosion which resulted when someone threw a bomb. Those who were responsible for the show controlled the situation by telling the audience that a lamp had been broken, and the show continued till the end.

Afterwards, on 15 March, Muhammad Nijm, who was starring in the show, "Asl wa Khamsah," [One Original and Five] was unable to go on with the show when a bomb was thrown at the tent which had been set up in the Agriculture Administration to house the theater. Lt Col Muhammad Bakri was injured in this incident, and Hamad Sayyid Muhammad and Muhammad Ahmad al-Najjar were arrested. Muhammad Ahmad 'Ali fled, and three bombs which were in the defendants' possession were seized.

When questioned by the district attorney's office, Muhammad Sayyid, [sic] the first defendant, confessed that he had made the bombs in his home and that he had thrown them in an attempt to prevent the performance of the play "because such performances are reprehensible."

But the strict security precautions which were taken for the performance of the play, "Al-Sa'ayidah Wasalu," [The People from Upper Egypt Have Arrived] allowed the show to go on till the end without incident. Tickets had been distributed on the day of the show to several police officers and to the mayors of many villages in al-Fayyum.

Ordinary citizens have not been spared the tyranny of extremism which is being practiced in the name of Islam. In the suburb of al-Manshiyah in Ibshaway, extremists demanded that a 50-year old female vendor of vegetables wear a veil while selling her produce. Because the demand made no sense to her, she refused to comply. Many bearded youths wielding canes and chains attacked her and scattered her produce. As a result, she has a permanent disability that resulted from fractures in her right foot.

According to one employee of Qarun Hotel, the owner of that hotel, Engineer Nabil, was asked to deny hotel accommodations to a woman because she wore makeup. When he refused to comply, two members of the Islamic groups stormed the hotel. When they were confronted by the hotel's workers, they fled. According to that employee, the two men were carrying pocket knives, chains and canes.

Years before they started attacking women who wore makeup and theaters, members of Islamic groups concentrated their attacks on Christians.

Churches and Tombs

Many people here remember the Itsa incident which occurred early in 1984. In the Village of Difinnu members of the Islamic groups attacked the building of Itsa Church and destroyed that part of the church where construction had been started, even though the church's construction permit had been issued by presidential decree.

When the Christians tried to complete construction of the church in 1985, once again extremists tore down that part of the church which had been built. That may be the reason why village residents felt that they had to turn down a meeting with Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman in Itsa before Ramadan. They must have realized that the Christians were their brothers and that what Dr 'Umar had done was hurting Muslims even more than it was hurting Christians.

The police officer we met in al-Fayyum Security Administration says, "As long as Dr 'Umar remains in prison, everything will remain calm. We've had no incidents after that."

The Islamic groups' extremism and terrorism did not spare tombs. Extremists started a fire in the tomb of al-Shaykh al-'Aqili in al-Nazlah Village, a center for manufacturing shells and explosives, because that shaykh's tomb is located in that village. They remained undeterred until some members of that organization were arrested. Ahmad Amin and Jamal Muhammad al-Sayfi were among those who were arrested and charged with arson of the shaykh's tomb.

Al-Shaykh Hasan, prayer leader at al-Nuwayri Mosque received death threats and threats that he would be tortured if he did not comply with the group's demands and condemn the government in his Friday sermon.

The Beginning

"Dr 'Umar came to the village of Fidimin in Sinnuris in the late sixties," says Dr Lutfi Sulayman, president of the Association of Medical Professionals in al-Fayyum. "With the mid-level degree he had earned, he was appointed to a position in al-Azhar Administration. He completed his studies while he was employed, and he earned a doctorate from the College of the Principles of Religion. Shaykh 'Umar was the guest of al-Hajj Ibrahim al-Shahid, one of the prominent figures in the village and a liberal officer who extended his hospitality to the shaykh because he was a shaykh of al-Azhar.

"And yet, when Dr 'Umar, in one of his early books, spoke of Fidimin Village, the village which was hospitable to him, he said, 'The people of this town will often swear to falsehoods. They are riffraff.'

"Although he continued to live in al-Fayyum, Dr 'Umar taught in Asyut. After that, he went to Saudi Arabia in the early seventies to work in King 'Abd-al-'Aziz University, and he stayed there for 5 years."

According to Dr Lutfi Sulayman, when Shaykh 'Umar returned from Saudi Arabia, he was accused of interfering in the conflict which took place between the government and the Left after the creation of political platforms in 1976. He issued a statement in which he attacked the Grouping Party and accused its members of being godless atheists, even though they may fast and pray. Shaykh 'Umar made those charges against the Grouping Party and its members even though he had supported them at a previous meeting which was attended by a large group of his supporters. At that meeting Shaykh 'Umar had said that although he could make a few observations about the party and its members, they were, nevertheless, believers who prayed and worshiped God and opened schools where people learned and studied the Koran.

Dr Lutfi points out that at that time 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman made no charges against the police. He added that one time when he was sitting with an officer who had investigated Dr 'Umar in the Jihad Organization case in which Anwar al-Sadat was killed, Shaykh 'Umar was apprehended with \$22,000 tied around his waist. The bills carried consecutive serial numbers.

Dr Lutfi asked one of the shaykh's followers about those funds which Dr 'Umar was spending. He said that Dr 'Umar had made some money when he worked in Saudi Arabia and that he was investing his money in a way that provided him a good return on his investment.

For example, Dr 'Umar entered into a business partnership with a resident of al-Fayyumi whose name is [name deleted]. The business lost 126,000 pounds, but Shaykh 'Umar refused to share the loss with his partner and held him accountable for his profit, which was estimated to be approximately 40 percent.

The grocer 'Abd-al-'Aziz from Fidimin Village used to receive 100 pounds a month from Dr 'Umar based on the fact that he was the shaykh's partner in a business. [as published] In a case involving staples in which the grocer was implicated, Dr 'Umar refused to pay his share of the loss and court fees. He insisted on receiving his full share of the profits which amounted to 40 percent.

Dr 'Umar is known to have a relationship with [name deleted]. He is the citizen who was killed 2 months ago, and so far, no one has been charged for committing that murder. This man who was known for lending money at very high interest rates was also known for his drinking. He drank so much, he used to mock prayer. When he would pray at the end of the day, he would say mockingly, "I gave God His due, and now I take what I am entitled to in this world." He would say that, and he would go on drinking!

One of Dr 'Umar's followers who declined to identify himself said that Shaykh 'Umar had married four times. He divorced two of his wives, one of whom he had married after her husband, a member of the Islamic groups, was killed in the September 1981 incidents.

His most recent marriage took place according to a custom in which a woman would give herself to a man unconditionally and without reservations. Dr 'Umar married the engineer from Asyut who had given herself to him. She now resides on the fourth floor of a building in the second block of a popular housing [development] in the neighborhood of al-Hadiqah. She bore him two sons. The other wife lives in the same building on the second floor. The residential units in al-Hadiqah are popular housing units whose ownership reverts to the tenants after they pay rent for 30 years.

Dr 'Umar has 11 sons. The oldest, Muhammad and Ahmad, are now engaged in the fighting which is going on in Afghanistan. It was their father who advised them to take part in that war.

The youngest son, 'Abdallah, is 14 years old and serves his father. He takes him to the mosque, and every week, after the Friday prayer, he sells his father's speeches, which are recorded on cassette tapes, for 170 piasters apiece.

Recently, through one of his aides, Dr 'Umar managed to buy the building whose lower floor is occupied by al-Shuhada' Mosque, the shaykh's stronghold. The building consists of four floors which are in the process of being finished.

The area of this mosque is no more than 30 meters. It fronts a dead end street which is no more than 9 meters long and 3.5 meters wide. The mosque, which is very simply furnished, has a library that has no more than 10 books and a modest water closet. The mosque can hold no more than 20 worshippers.

'Abd-al-Qadir Abu-al-Layl, one of Dr 'Umar's neighbors, described to us the shaykh's daily procession to the mosque. "When Shaykh 'Umar goes to the mosque to pray, he is flanked on both sides by two individuals from the organization. One of his followers walks ahead to regulate traffic and stop cars. Dr 'Umar is trailed by six individuals, and that number grows as the procession moves along until there are about 40 persons walking in a procession behind the shaykh. Two police cars are always behind that procession; they follow Shaykh 'Umar wherever he goes."

The people of al-Fayyum make fun of that procession whenever they see it, and many stories have been told about it. One of Qarun Hotel's employees said that one time Dr 'Umar walked out of his house and two police cars followed him. It turned out that he had gone out to buy two bunches of watercress, and returned home. But despite this siege around the shaykh wherever he goes, he still managed to flee to Asyut before the recent incidents, and no one noticed that he had gone.

Rigorous Supervision

An officer who is a colonel in al-Fayyum's Security Administration said, on the condition that he not be identified, that Dr 'Umar had fled once while the guards who were entrusted with the task of following him slept. "This is not unusual at all here when someone is being watched. There are services in all the churches, but they sleep at night, and nothing ever happens to them. It is known that except for the government, Dr 'Umar wants nothing from no one.

"How many people are charged with the task of following him?"

"All the policemen in al-Fayyum are charged with the task of following Dr 'Umar. We follow him because sometimes his followers carry bombs and things of that nature, and that creates unrest. If Dr 'Umar is held, all this unrest will come to an end. That's all there is to it."

"Have changes been made in al-Fayyum's police administration after the incident in which Shaykh 'Umar went to Asyut?"

"Yes, Mahmud Radwan's service term was not extended. He was the assistant director of security for public security, and he retired. Lt Col Ahmad 'Abd-al-Raziq, a state security detective, was transferred to Bani Suwayf."

"What about other organizations in al-Fayyum?"

"All the other organizations are merely followers of Dr 'Umar. When he is arrested, he is alone and the others flee. Then when he is questioned, he says, 'What do you think I have been doing? I am just a blind man.'"

"What kind of people are his followers?"

"Most of them are craftsmen. What is interesting, however, is that although these poor people's homes are very modestly furnished, they own splendid and magnificent books, each of which may cost more than 50 pounds."

Relationship to Jihad Organization

45040336 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic
24 Apr 89 p 6

[Article by Ibrahim Khalil: "The Story of the Relationship between Dr 'Umar and the Organization"]

[Text] The selection of Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman for the position of mufti to the Islamic groups goes back to 1980 when he was professor and chairman of the Department of Exegesis at al-Azhar University, the Asyut Branch. It was there that he formed a close relationship with leaders of the Jihad Organization like Najih Ibrahim, Karam Zuhdi and Usamah Hafiz.

Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman was favored for that position as a result of a well-known incident which occurred in September 1970 when the late Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir died. The Ministry of Awqaf had issued instructions that prayer services for the soul of the departed leader were to be held in the mosques. Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman was the only speaker at a mosque who refused to pray for the departed leader in his mosque in al-Fayyum. He even delivered a speech condemning 'Abd-al-Nasir's repressive practices against Muslims and "his dismal record" against Islam and Muslims. For that reason he asked worshippers not to pray for his soul.

The Jihad Organization stepped out of the limelight after Islamic groups received effective and painful blows in the aftermath of the 1981 incidents. Later, however, the organization resumed its activities; it reorganized itself; and a new mufti, Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, was selected for the Islamic group. A delegation from that group traveled to al-Fayyum and met with Dr 'Umar in his home where they offered him that leadership position. They suggested that the organization have an advisory council and that it have a leader in each governorate. They agreed to engage in activities under the slogan of enjoining justice and forbidding evil. The group published a new book, entitled "Mithaq al-'Amal al-Islami" [The Islamic Action Covenant]. In that book the nine points which govern the group's work are explained. These points are: our aim, our creed, our understanding, our goal, our order, our provisions, our loyalty, our aggression, and our life in our community.

There are significant differences between Dr 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and the Jihad Organization [on the one hand] and the Muslim Brothers [on the other]. These differences were such that members of one organization would make accusations against members of the other organization and use knives to fight battles against them in some mosques. Members of the Jihad Organization believe that the Muslim Brothers are no longer effective members of the People's Assembly. But their differences with the Muslim Brothers went further than that when they published a book that was full of critical remarks about the Muslim Brotherhood Group. That book is entitled "Al-Harakah al-Islamiyah wa al-'Amal al-Hizbi" [The Islamic Movement and Partisan Activity].

Islamic groups have recently tried to change their method of operations by reaching out to the masses. They set up a so-called Solidarity Fund, which is located in one of the mosques in the area of 'Ayn Shams. This fund collects material contributions, donations of food which are offered to the poor at the end of Ramadan, and monetary contributions from citizens. All these contributions are then distributed to students, widows and sick people. The fund also accepts other material contributions like fabrics and used clothing which are laundered and placed in bags.

In the coming period Islamic groups will find themselves facing two possible courses of action. The first one involves the possibility that the Jihad Organization could pull together what is left of the organization and give up Islamic action for good, thereby avoiding the growing rejection of that group among the masses. The second course of action involves the possibility that the Jihad Organization could react against the government by resorting to more vicious and more violent actions and coming up with new methods to act against the government. The second possible course of action is the more likely one.

'Abd-al-Rahman Theological Views

45040336 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic
24 Apr 89 pp 7-8

[Article by Karam Jabr: "Rehearsing the Murder of Najib Mahfuz"]

[Excerpts] It seems that Shaykh 'Umar's recent trip to Asyut a few days before his arrest in al-Fayyum was a dress rehearsal for the masses who are waking up to oppose and defy terrorism. They are working with state agencies to tighten the noose around terrorism, and they are also turning away from those who traffic in people's problems and crises, even though they may try to hide that under the cloak of religion.

Some people tried to depict Shaykh 'Umar's recent escapade as a migration from al-Fayyum to Asyut. They made up stories and fanciful tales about the shaykh's journey and claimed that al-Shaykh 'Umar had succeeded in misleading police forces who were stationed

around his home. They claimed that while someone who resembled the shaykh left Shaykh 'Umar's house to pray in 'al-Shuhada' Mosque in al-Fayyum, Shaykh 'Umar himself, guarded closely by his supporters and followers, went to Asyut. [passage omitted]

[In his effort to attract new followers] Shaykh 'Umar declared clearly and unequivocally that his method was that of fighting to advance God's wisdom and God's way of life. He declared that he pursues this course of action to protect those who believe in God and in their religion from being swept away by deception and corruption. Shaykh 'Umar, who made that declaration when the Jihad Organization was on trial for the murder of President al-Sadat, left no opportunity for rational and logical dialogue. Nor did he leave an opportunity for wisdom or good advice when he said, "It is inevitable that the tide will rise; that the dams will collapse; and that those who are less than human will be inundated by the deluge and buried under the rubble. Koranic verses about the Jihad will then be revealed and the sound of muttered verses from the Koran will be heard. These sounds will be followed by the blasting of weapons: evil will be repaid with evil, and treachery will be punished. Resentment against those who manipulate religion will grow; they will be hurt in a manner that shall strike terror in people's hearts. War will be declared on suspicious parties and the air will be cleared of the effects of skepticism and polytheism, of the evil deeds committed by the adherents of revealed religion, and of the inconsistency of hypocrites."

These groups whose ideas and religious opinions are derived from Shaykh 'Umar's thoughts claim that Egyptian territory is godless territory. They claim that Egypt is the seat of war which must be spurned and abandoned in favor of caves and mountains so that peace may be established. To achieve peace people must abandon this territory. At first, they must fight defensively; then, depending on the situation, they must go on the offensive. The presence of a person in godless territory drives that person to commit sinful and vile deeds which would eventually lead him into Hell. That is why abandoning this territory is a must. [passage omitted]

Shaykh 'Umar promotes such ideas and formal legal opinions in his study groups, lectures and press conferences. These ideas and formal legal opinions threaten society with endless bloodshed. He thinks that drama and plays violate the canonical laws of Islam because they cause evil deeds, arouse people's instincts, and spread corruption and lewd behavior among young people. [To him,] music and singing, which are incompatible with the canonical laws of Islam, are akin to adultery. Shaykh 'Umar thinks that Shaykh Tantawi and his formal legal opinions were chosen by the authorities to serve them, not to serve others. He thinks that scholars like al-Ghazali, al-Sha'rawi, and al-Tayyib al-Najjar are biased and partial to the authority. He thinks a ruler's atheism disqualifies him from membership in the religious community.

His Eminence Shaykh 'Umar goes on and on in this vein, declaring publicly in front of everyone that he is willing to debate anyone, provided that such a debate take place under the supervision of a neutral arbitration committee. Shaykh 'Umar declares his willingness to debate anyone provided the government adhere to the outcome and the consequences of said arbitration on subjects like renouncing the ruler as an atheist, enjoining justice and forbidding evil, and any other subjects which might be suggested by the committee. [passage omitted]

Article Voices Doubts on ACC Structure 45050253 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 Feb 89 p 5

[Article by 'Adil Husayn]

[Excerpts] When I received an invitation to accompany the president of the republic on his trip to Baghdad to sign the agreement on the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC], I welcomed it immediately and was delighted. It goes without saying that I did not feel there was any contradiction whatsoever between my return from a visit to Tehran and my going to Baghdad on the occasion of the signing of an agreement with it, and I reckon that the official Egyptian role must be characterized by the same thing that characterized my course of action. For the Egyptian state must resist all who try to wreck its special relations with the Arab countries, and it is its duty to strive to deepen those relations. In this effort it also ought to be careful not to form a bloc of Arabs directed against the states neighboring the Arab region, especially Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia for reasons pertaining to Islamic civilization or for geopolitical considerations. I understood from officials in Tehran that they expect of Cairo this great and judicious role.

With regard to what we saw in Baghdad, the Labor Party supports on principle any rapprochement, cooperation, or union between two or more Arab countries, and Prof Ibrahim Shukri has stated that on every occasion.

We support any cooperation between the Arab countries, regardless of the intentions of those undertaking this cooperation and unification. Our only condition is that it be in earnest, that is that the concerned parties actually mean to organize their affairs together, taking measures and implementing policies that will facilitate the movement of ideas, people, goods, and capital. The steps may be gradual—indeed they must be gradual—but what we ask is that the steps be deeds and not words. If that happens, then the intentions of those undertaking the matter—as I said—do not concern us very much, for intentions might change, and those having the intentions might change or die, but what is established in the way of interaction and intermingling among millions of people and their faculties will abide in the land and will not pass away, God willing.

These words of ours about the need for earnestness derive their legitimacy from the number of phony projects signed by Arab leaders during the past 30 years,

only to buried under piles of dirt, or to be tossed into the wastebasket. It is enough to point to our Union of Arab Republics (Egypt, Syria, Libya). This union was the direct cause, as was said at the time, of Sadat's turning against those who shared power with him on 14 May 1971, and we might mention that the anniversary of the signing of the agreement of this union has turned into an annual celebration and holiday.

But in spite of these phenomena, we have seen that the trilateral union did not in reality go beyond the signing of the the documents by presidents, the designation of a headquarters in Cairo, the appointment of some officials, and the meeting of some committees.

If one wants another example, we might mention the integration agreements between Egypt and the Sudan. True, the agreements were officially cancelled after Numayri's overthrow, but what was accomplished when they were in effect?

In light of our bitter experience it will be understood then that we will listen everywhere, following the signing of the new agreement, to see whether the case will be different from what we have seen in the past. When we returned from Baghdad, I met the great nationalist Dr Hamdi al-Sayyid at the airport, and his wishes were mixed with obvious anxiety, while in the People's Assembly Prof Ibrahim Shukri expressed the same misgivings.

While we were in Baghdad, I asked one of the Egyptian officials: "If the project is serious, then why did things develop and come to a conclusion so quickly and suddenly?" The answer was: "Who said that the matter moved quickly? His majesty King Husayn has been pressing for this project for more than a year, and he is the one who deserves most of the credit for us getting to where we have."

After that I had to ask about the wisdom in preventing the government throughout this period from expanding the scope of discussion and preparation of a matter that is supposed to be important and serious. (If it is serious!). Why was the government prevented from informing the parties about the agreement before it was signed? And why did the agreement go into effect on the day it was signed, without the leaders waiting for debate in the constitutional bodies (which in Egypt are embodied in the parties, the cabinet, and the People's Assembly)? Does that mean that debate in these bodies was a formal issue with a foregone conclusion? [passage omitted]

All these ideas and agreements have failed to achieve their goal, not because—as is obvious—they concentrated on political aspects, or because they hastened and tried to leap instead of proceeding slowly, for God is the witness that all attempts and agreements were based on the understanding of moving gradually and in stages, and starting from simple points. If it is said that the door of the quadripartite Arab Cooperation Council is open, we

will respond that in the past a number of countries, having decided on cooperation and integration, have not then invited others to join them. However, the self-evident principle to which all adhere is based on the fact that all Arabs (from the ocean to the gulf) are linked by one future in solid economic integration.

Integration was implemented gradually and in stages, but with respect to those included in integration there were no countries actually integrating, and other countries have not entered into integration schemes; rather the essential principle was that the entire Arab rank should advance, without pivotal points or fragmentation, towards economic integration, step by step. [passage omitted]

We assume, unfortunately, that foreigners will interfere and exert influence, because we have noticed how quickly they have moved in our region to rearrange things. In fact, we sense something akin to coordination, for it was decided that the agreement of the five Arab states of North Africa would be signed on the same day that the ACC agreement was signed in Baghdad!

Was that a coincidence? Or was there a "maestro?" And do we see in our current situation an Arab "maestro" directing events with such planning and precision?

Would to God there were an Arab "maestro!"

With respect to those who are surprised by this talk about the presence of a foreign maestro, I would ask them to make a point of reading the many books and studies which are published now and which analyze secret foreign documents, and which tell how affairs were arranged, plots and conspiracies hatched, and forces and fleets moved as needed.

All these documents reveal that the forces dominating the international system were always eager to tear apart our Arab Islamic nation and prevent its revival, and at every stage they mapped out what was appropriate to the circumstances of that stage.

The last of the secret documents is from 30 years ago, but that is enough to reveal what happened after the First World War, after the Second World War, and in the fifties. No intelligent person should imagine that things have changed now, so study what has happened in the past and take heed. When we study and take heed, we will see that all the foreign movements have aimed in the end to continue their dominance over our faculties and drain our resources, and that includes protecting and supporting Israel, and increasing tension and enmity with neighboring Islamic states.

But if the time is right for partial Arab groupings to occur, that is, if the international climate does not object to that, or that it pushes in that direction, then why do we not take the opportunity to get the most appropriate unification projects for Egypt?

The current groupings are not based—according to what is said—on ideological foundations, but rather they are economic groupings to propel growth rates. That is all very well, but in that case the geographic context must be taken into account, which would necessarily reflect the intensity of historical relations between the people who live in these neighbouring countries.

In this respect it has always been said that the grouping of the North African Arab countries represents in fact a model of proximity and interaction, which create an exclusiveness in the relationship between Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia (within the framework of general Arab integration). Something similar has been said of the people of the Arabian peninsula, and therefore the arrangements that were made in each of the two regions have their obvious logic, but our quadripartite grouping is not based on such reasoning, and therefore those who explain the establishment of the grouping on the basis of transitory political considerations may have some justification.

In defining the characteristics of the partial units, it has been customary for Syria to be with Iraq and Jordan, and for North Yemen to be with South Yemen along with the rest of the people of the peninsula, and for Egypt to be with Libya and the Sudan. So what will happen now? What is the future of the Sudan or Syria if there is earnest determination to go on in accordance with the provisions of this quadripartite agreement?

The public statements and texts of the agreement give assurances that the door is open, but it need only be said that the rules of the agreement were decided upon by those who set it up, and whoever wishes to join must do so in accordance with what we have decided. It goes without saying that this constitutes an obstacle. I noticed in fact that Pres Saddam was reserved in his news conference with us, when questions arose about the possibility of Syria joining the council. I also heard, through an unofficial channel while we were in Baghdad, that the fifth state to be nominated was Democratic Yemen, but during the same news conference Pres 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih (the president of North Yemen) took pains to scotch this possibility, when he said that the economic and social conditions prevailing in the states of the four-partite council do not permit a state which applies socialism to join, and such states must first alter their systems before asking to join the council. Pres Saddam Husayn had to intervene saying that the Yemeni president meant a particular kind of socialism. Such intervention was necessary because it is well known that the name of the Ba'th party is the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party. But the Yemeni president lost no time in adding that states with a capitalist orientation must also be barred . . . I wonder who is meant by that description of his?

Whether the door opens or not, what has been achieved in this agreement must not divert us from persevering in the attempt (internationally and regionally) to achieve

the establishment of a harmonious socio-economic group composed of Egypt, Libya, and the Sudan. A senior official told me, when I mentioned that to him, that there are vast differences between the leaders of these countries, but I am sure that so far we have not put forth enough intelligent and well-planned effort in order to achieve what results are possible on this pivotal issue. It is unreasonable that the Kingdom of Morocco would be able to come to an understanding with Libya, whereas we ourselves are incapable of such an understanding!

I say once again, if international circumstances now push in the direction of forming Arab groupings, with several states included in each, then we must seize the opportunity and come up with the best formation possible.

The final point after that is:

Within the framework of what has been achieved, and within the framework of any future unification activity, would the reduction of the Egyptian role help in the realization of cooperation and unity? The Arabs gathered in Cairo to establish the Arab League, and that remained the case until the end of the seventies. I do not think that that was one of the mistakes that are charged against the Arabs that we must renounce.

In the statement by Pres Saddam on the occasion of the signing of the agreement, it was brought out that it is time for us to drop the question of the state which demands the leadership role because it has the most numbers and the largest army. Frankly I was not happy about this statement, especially since the successive measures taken to establish the quadripartite council have proceeded in the expressed direction, inasmuch as the founding meeting was held in Baghdad, and the headquarters of the general secretariat will be in Amman.

I mention this issue without reservation or sensitivity because I believe in all objectivity, and not because I am from Egypt, that this tendency is harmful, not helpful.

In spite of that, and whatever the reservations, we support, as we have said, the cooperation project, on condition that it be in earnest.

If the matter is in earnest, it will be within our capacity to treat, through participation, everything that is proven to be in error.

May God grant us success.

Editorial Predicts No Arab Progress in Bush Era
45040254B Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 28 Feb 89 p 8

[Commentary by Khalid Midhat Abu al-Fadl]

[Text] The election of the president of the United States is important both to America and on the international scene, since there is no doubt that the formation of the

American government affects all policy standards in the Middle East region. Here I would like to give an objective background to the new American president, in the hope it will be useful to those who plan state policy in particular, and Arab policy in general.

The policy of Pres Bush can be described as a policy of non-policy, since for about a year and during his long political history he has not taken decisive positions. Indeed it can perhaps be said that his view often fluctuates according to the prevailing climate. For example, with respect to America, Bush used to defend a woman's right to have an abortion, but he changed his view suddenly when it became clear to him that the influential elements in his party that had standing in many local affairs did not support this view. One of the most surprising things is that during his political history he has claimed five states as his residence, when it is customary in American politics for the candidate to adopt one state to be his permanent residence and his political base.

When Bush was CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] director it was known of him, contrary to others who had preceded him, that he did not take decisive positions on any issue, and he did not pursue risky ventures in any of the activities of this huge agency; rather he undertook to administer it according to the rules and regulations without any extreme or reckless operations. Also when he was the American ambassador to China his diplomacy was very ordinary, and he did not do anything that could be considered a notable accomplishment on behalf of developing Chinese-American relations.

It can be said that Bush's victory in the elections is attributable to his raising the banner which many Americans welcome, namely his announcement that he would not raise taxes. As for his statements regarding American foreign policy, they expressed the general prevailing tendency, namely showing support for Israel, being for a policy of accord with Russia and China, and cooperation with Canada and the states of Western Europe.

This unremarkable personality of Pres Bush makes him subject to the influence of two influential groups in the American Congress, the first being the group of extreme conservatives and the second being the Israel lobby, and both groups are known for their hostility to the Arabs, and for their strong support for Israel. In spite of that, Bush is distinguished by a strange characteristic which is unusual in the political sphere: namely, he is keen on personal loyalty. For example he appointed an old friend of his of Arab descent named Sununu to the post of chief of staff, and Sununu is known for his hostility to Israel. In spite of the uproar and anger of the Israeli lobby, he stuck to this choice, explaining his position by saying that he had confidence in him after having known him and dealt with him for a long time. One of those who worked with Bush when he held the post of vice president told me that you have to win him over personally before you win him over politically. No doubt there is a

certain amount of danger in this, because the Israeli politicians have had more experience and broader contacts in American political circles than the Arabs.

Therefore, I do not believe that the Arabs will perceive a radical change in American policy in the next 4 years, and I do not think that the PLO will get any basic concessions from the Bush administration. It would be more appropriate for it to concentrate on the European states, in the hope that that would create a certain amount of pressure on the American government. We ought to realize that Reagan would not have agreed to meeting with PLO officials if he had had another chance at the presidency; as it was, he did not see any harm in opposing the Israeli lobby before the end of his term. As for Bush, the pursuer of a policy of non-policy, it is expected that things will remain as they are, until a factor exerting personal pressure appears that pushes him to take a different position. The same can be expected with regard to the rest of the situations in the Middle East region, with the exception of a certain amount of American-Iranian rapprochement, if Iran so desires.

As for what I believe, during the next 4 years the Arab governments will not be able to play a larger role in increasing American-Arab cooperation, because of their lack of personal ties to Pres Bush. However, since Bush has not been considered to be ideologically hostile to the Arabs, there is a great opportunity for the American Arab lobby to bring about this pressure. Therefore the Arab-American organizations must work hard to open the doors to the White House, and these organizations must be given all support possible. The opportunity will be there for these organizations after they assure Pres Bush that most of the Jews in America had supported the Democratic candidate Dukakis. No doubt this position of the American Jews, in addition to the personality of Pres Bush, constitutes a favorable opportunity for Arab-American pressure groups, which must be supported by all ways and means possible, all that on condition that all support possible is given to keep the Palestinian uprising going and to escalate it so that the Palestinian issue will continue to be a conspicuous problem and a burning issue that demands a solution.

Paper on Palestinian Use of Weapons in Occupied Territories

*NC0306081189 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0608 GMT 3 Jun 89*

[Text] The newspaper AL-AHRAM asserts that the use of firearms by Palestinian elements to resist the Israeli occupation forces in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip 17 months after the beginning of the intifadah [uprising] of rocks, has been an expected escalation due to increased Israeli brutality and repression.

In its editorial today, the paper says that the use of the firearms in a few recent Palestinian attacks against Israeli patrols has actually begun to result in casualties among the occupation forces. The Israeli authorities

have begun to fear that such incidents will increase and spread until they constitute a general phenomenon and a conspicuous turning point in the use of force.

The paper adds that these incidents, even though they are limited, represent a serious setback for the policy of tyranny. This policy has not succeeded, despite its huge arsenal, except in drawing international resentment and condemnation, in addition to domestic denunciation from Israeli society itself, of the reckless repression methods that are having no real results.

The paper remarks that, despite the numerous warnings to the Israeli Government, the resistance operations might escalate to higher levels of armed struggle. It says that despite the repeated appeals by international forums and various governments to the ruling forces in Israel to end the excessive violence and terrorism and to adopt a reasonable policy, the Israeli leaders continue to cling to the policy of recklessness prevailing in their governing circles.

The paper concludes that it is possible to regard the instances involving the use of firearms as individual responses to this redoubled violence and also as an apparent warning that the resistance will escalate, even if to a limited extent, in order to face the excessive [Israeli] use of weapons.

Muslim Youth's 'Favored' Mosques Toured During Ramadan

45040314 Cairo LIWA' AL-ISLAM in Arabic
6 Apr 89 pp 22-23

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted]

The pure, unstained, Muslim youth of Egypt know the true face of Ramadan, the evenings and nights of Ramadan, the true, radiant face of Cairo in this noble month. We, dear reader, will accompany you on a Ramadan tour, so that you may become familiar with the Ramadan face of Cairo, which is filled with sweet sentiments of faith, purity, cleanliness and sincerity. [passage omitted]

The true face of Cairo is apparent in certain mosques which have become favored by Muslim youths, most of whom desire to visit these mosques during the noble month of Ramadan. The most prominent of these mosques is the al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah [Islamic Legal Society] mosque on al-Jala' Street, where Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman is leading the traditional Ramadan prayers in a sweet voice which stirs the emotions. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Khaliq began at the al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah mosque on al-Jala' Street more than five years ago. He is completing the reading of the Koran on 27 Ramadan. What a day! The mosque is filled with youths. You will not find a place in the mosque if you go 15 minutes before the evening prayer. It is filled completely, including the second floor, and the third floor, which is set aside for women. The street is also completely filled, requiring

traffic police to close al-Jala' Street under the bridge. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Khaliq gives a lesson in the short break between the two prostrations. During the rest period, you can see the mutual affection, love, and respect which worshippers have for each other. Many of the youths have brought ice water, juice, and tea, which they share among each other; a little becomes a lot by the grace of God and the blessing of the mosque.

There are more than 20,000 worshippers in the al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah mosque on al-Jala' Street on 27 Ramadan. The al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah mosque in al-'Atabah and the al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah mosque in al-Jizah Square are also crowded with Muslim youth attending the traditional Ramadan prayers, which entail the recitation of a 30th of the Koran on every day of Ramadan.

One of this year's surprises is that Shaykh Muhammad Jibril is conducting the traditional Ramadan prayers at the 'Amr Ibn-al-'As Mosque, instead of al-Rayyan Mosque in al-Haram, due to the closure of al-Rayyan Mosque following the government's seizure of the assets of al-Rayyan.

God has endowed Shaykh Muhammad Jibril with a sweet voice, which captivates hearts with its sympathy and power. Young people began to become acquainted with Shaykh Muhammad Jibril two years ago, after al-Rayyan Mosque opened in al-Haram. Shaykh Jibril used to come every day to lead prayers. He leads close to 10,000 worshippers, most of them youth, during the traditional Ramadan prayers.

The 'Ibad al-Rahman Mosque in the al-Talibiyah area in al-Haram has prepared a rich program, which includes religious lessons, seminars on Koranic recitation, and a program for children and primary and preparatory school students. Prayers are led by physician 'Isam al-'Aryan, a member of parliament, who is assisted by Dr Muhammad al-Farmawi of the Cairo College of Agriculture. The traditional Ramadan prayers, including the recitation of a full portion of the Koran each day of Ramadan, are conducted at 'Ibad al-Rahman Mosque. Usually, the crowning touch, which is the conclusion of the Koran on 27 Ramadan, is recited by physician 'Isam al-'Aryan, who alternates with several propagandists in leading the daily lesson.

The Salah al-Din Mosque in al-Manyal plays another, exemplary role in the field of joint social responsibility. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rashid Saqr, the mosque's imam and an Islamic propagandist, encourages the throngs of worshippers, who flock to Friday prayer services at the mosque to contribute to the poor and needy. He and a select group from the mosque distribute these contributions and alms to the needy. The Salah al-Din Mosque has a rich program during Ramadan, which includes, lessons, study groups, Koranic recitation groups, and discussion groups.

During the nights of Ramadan, you find the Koran in the exhibitions set up in the public squares, such as al-Tahrir Square, al-Husayn Quarter, al-Sayyidah Zaynab Square, al-Jizah Square, and most of the popular quarters. You also find children's songs. The effort here is attributed to the originator of the idea, the Safir Company. You also find tapes of the Palestinian League, songs of the intifadah [Palestinian uprising], "Abu Mazin," "Abu al-Jawd," and cassettes of the great propagandists and theologians. [passage omitted]

KUWAIT

New Soviet Middle East Policy, Implications Assessed

44040339 Kuwait *AL-WATAN* in Arabic 1 Mar 89 p 25

[Article by Dr Ahmad Sidqi al-Dajani: "Dealing with the New Soviet Policy in Our Area"]

[Text] How are we Arabs dealing with the new Soviet policy in our Arab area?

That was the question I was facing as I participated in the Second Arab-Soviet Colloquium which was held in Cairo on 14 and 15 January 1989. In several working sessions [the following topics] were dealt with: Variables in the Soviet Union; Soviet Foreign Policy; the New Soviet Policy in the Middle East; New Pragmatic Arab Tendencies in Political, Economic, and Social Areas; Arab-Soviet Cooperation in Economic and Technological Areas; the Future of Arab-Soviet Relations; and the Settlement of Regional Conflicts. In preparing myself to participate in this colloquium, I used a paper I had prepared 10 months ago for the first colloquium on "The Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict." I used that paper and the discussions which took place on that topic to prepare myself to talk about "the New Soviet Policy in the Middle East."

As I considered the proceedings of the second session in this colloquium, it seemed to me that we, as Arabs, were entering into a new age of Arab-Soviet relations, an age that will require us to use the "logic of action" which is based on "a rational view" that recognizes "variables" and benefits from past experiences. It also seemed to me that the prevailing image which citizens of our nation have of the Soviet Union—an image whose origins go back to the fifties and sixties—will undergo significant change. That image will become more reasonable and more realistic.

As I tried to answer the question about how we as Arabs were going to deal with the new Soviet policy in our area, I found myself pondering other related questions. Is there a new Soviet policy in our Arab area? What are the boundaries of "change" in that policy?

That question came to mind while I was engaged in conversations that were taking place in connection with several discussions on strategy. These discussions were

held recently one after the other. I recall that a dear friend, who is a veteran Arab politician and strategy specialist, observed that Soviet participants in the colloquium reacted with reserve to the emphasis that was placed on describing "the novelty" in Soviet policy. My friend too wondered about the extent of change in "a superpower's policy." It is true that there is a new Soviet policy in our Arab area and in other areas of our world as well. Mikhail Gorbachev's book, "Perestroika," is subtitled, "New Thinking for Our Country and the Whole World." Naturally, new thinking implies a change in policy, and, in fact, reading the book does reveal that this change is by no means small. Therefore, our approach to the question about how to deal with Soviet policy must be based on a fact which has undergone change.

Gorbachev explained the principal motive behind this new thinking in the introduction to his book. "Not only is the world living under the cloud of a nuclear threat, it is also suffering from an inability to find solutions to major social problems. The world is unable to deal with new pressures generated by the scientific, technological revolution and by growing problems worldwide that are becoming more aggravated. Gorbachev also explained the standard for the new historic thinking, and he showed that it involved "the main worry of our time: "the worry about the nuclear threat which surrounds our planet. Gorbachev concluded by emphasizing the need to adopt new political thinking which not only does not recognize the concept of "the other," chiefly the United States, but also "appreciates the Americans' contribution to the world's civilization and takes into consideration the legitimate national interests of the United States." According to this new thinking, the Soviet Union would be "willing to work with the American people in a variety of directions."

When we consider the extent of the change which occurred in the new Soviet policy, we take into consideration the fact that state policies are the product of several factors interacting with each other. Some of these factors are constant, like location; and others, like economic, social, intellectual and political factors are variable. Another variable factor is leadership. It is natural, therefore, that the political geography of the Soviet Union should presuppose the existence of a constant element in Soviet policy and in the policy of the Russian Empire before the 1917 October Revolution. And while that element has remained constant, other variable factors have been changing. Thus, the change in Soviet policy does not go beyond being a rearrangement of that policy's goals and, consequently, a rearrangement of its priorities. Accordingly, a broader change in methods is possible. In his new monograph on "Soviet Middle Eastern Policy," which he wrote early in 1988, the academician, Primakov, spoke about "Gorbachev's introduction of new methods of action in dealing with international questions." He also spoke about a "positive flexibility" in the application of principles.

Where does our Arab area stand in the new Soviet thinking? What are the goals of Soviet policy in that area?

That question thrust itself into my thoughts as I considered the purport of Soviet policy in our area. I pondered the Soviet Union's use of the term, "the Arab Middle East" to refer to the Arab area, and I wished the Soviet Union had used another term. That prompted me to remind the audience, when I addressed them in the colloquium, that careful examination of a term that is used by a state's official policy was important because of the effect that term has on determining that state's political direction. I made it clear that "we try to avoid using the term, the Middle East. We use the term, the Arab area or the Arab homeland, as a substitute because the former term, the Middle East, as defined by those who coined it in the West, includes other areas, which have other crises, but does not include most of Arab Africa. There is also a growing intellectual movement in our Arab country which finds that the term, Middle East, has always been linked with western colonialist plans in the Arab countries.

It is noteworthy that when Chairman Gorbachev discusses the Asian complex in the Indian Ocean in his book, he reminds his readers that the Soviet Union is both an Asian and a European country. Palestine is located in southwest Asia. That is why a large Asian country like India is always talking about the conflict in southwest Asia. The Arab area is located in southwest Asia and in North Africa. Why then doesn't the Soviet Union use the term, the Arab area, to refer to the great Arab homeland? Actually, if the Soviet Union were to do that, we would be able to talk about protecting "the integrity of Asia" and the "integrity of Africa" just as Gorbachev talks about protecting "the integrity of Europe" when he addresses western Europe. Using the term, the Arab area, would provide an opportunity to remind others of the cultural ties between our large homeland and the Islamic republics in the Soviet Union. This is because we all belong to the circle of Arab, Islamic civilization.

The new Soviet policy looks at our Arab area as part of the Third World where regional conflicts break out. Gorbachev discussed this world and these conflicts in the fifth chapter of the second volume of his book. He indicated that his country realized "that the future of humanity was tied to how that world will change and develop." The Third World is "a large world with diverse characteristics. It has major concerns and difficult problems." Gorbachev indicated that rich western countries were still collecting "new colonialist taxes" from these countries. In just the last decade the profits made by American companies in the developing countries were more than four times the capitals of these companies. These developing countries are suffering "from the burden of stifling foreign debts." Gorbachev expected a severe international conflict would occur

before the world can achieve a new economic system that would take the interests of all countries into consideration. Such a system would be based on balancing those interests.

Understanding why regional conflicts occur is a must in dealing with these conflicts. Gorbachev explained that these conflicts were the result of internal or regional differences whose foundations were laid in the colonialist past. These differences could also be based on new social processes; they could be the result of the restoration of an occupation and annexation policy; or they could be based on all these matters collectively. Gorbachev also explained that terrorism was the most important product of these matters which "become a fertile ground for international terrorism." Gorbachev affirms that "the Soviet Union does not recognize terrorism in principle. The Soviet Union is willing to work diligently with the remaining countries of the world to uproot this evil." He proposes ideas in that regard, and then he cautions, "But we must realize quite clearly that in order to eradicate terrorism, we must eliminate the causes of conflict and terrorism."

Gorbachev did not explain the objectives of Soviet policy in our Arab area in his book. But Primakov discussed a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Zionist conflict in his monograph, which we referred to. He spoke clearly about "guaranteeing that the area not be turned into an area of confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States." The monograph also touched upon two new aspects of the conflict that are worthy of interest. "First, the fact that Israel has atomic bombs shifts the conflict and changes it from a traditional conflict to a nuclear one. Second, the growing standing of Islamic tendencies in the Arab area is casting a wide shadow which is posing a threat to a peaceful solution to the conflict." It thus seems clear that the objectives of the Soviet policy in our area are closely related to the Soviet Union's security. The aim of this policy is to safeguard the Soviet Union from the danger of a confrontation with the United States; from the danger posed by the Zionist entity as a base for nuclear weapons; and from what the Soviet Union perceives is the threat of Islamic tendencies in the area and the severe threat they may pose to world peace.

What is the import of this new Soviet policy? Specifically, what is new in this policy, and where will it lead? In setting forth the import of its policy toward "the Middle East crisis" the Soviet Union tries to call attention to two principles which control this policy. These two principles are "recognizing the state of Israel" and "supporting the inalienable rights of the Arab peoples, including the rights of the Arab people of Palestine." Gorbachev tried to explain in his book that Moscow, which firmly opposes Israel's expansionist policy and supports those Arab rights, rejects the charge against the Soviet Union that "it is predisposed to hostility against Israel." It is known that the Soviet Union was one of the first

countries to participate in the creation of the state of Israel. Today, Soviet policy is trying to deny that "false charge" which is being made against it by the West.

The Soviet Union finds the Middle East to be an area with a "difficult and complex problem where the interests of numerous parties converge." The Soviet Union thinks that a solution to this problem would serve the interests of the East, the West, and the whole world. It disagrees with the point of view which finds this problem insoluble. "One may not agree with that point of view either for political or moral considerations." The Soviet Union thinks that what is required is that "the quest for a solution continue and attempts to find a common denominator between the interests of Arabs, the interests of Israel and its neighbors and those of other countries go on." Thus, when we come to a discussion and a consideration of interests, we find that these interests are those of many parties outside the area. They are the interests of many parties which are referred to as other countries. Gorbachev explained unequivocally that "the Soviet Union does not want the course and the shape of the settlement to cause any harm to the natural interests of the United States and the West. Nor does the Soviet Union aspire to dislodge the United States from the Middle East, not to mention the fact that this would be unrealistic. In turn, the United States must not undertake unrealistic missions." !!

Based on the foregoing, [it may be said that] Soviet policy is based on the fact that it is necessary that the Soviet Union participate in the settlement process which will involve convening an international conference on the Middle East. This means resisting "unilateral deals." The Soviet policy, which is trying to get the negotiating process going "between two or more parties," is extremely flexible on the format for the conference, "provided the conference not turn into an umbrella under which unilateral deals and steps can be concealed," as Gorbachev says. This Soviet policy will try to show in practical terms that "it harbors no hostility toward Israel and that it recognizes its legal right to exist." Evidence provided by this Soviet policy will include progress in diplomatic relations which may now be restored as soon as an international conference is convened, not when Israel completes its withdrawal from the Arab land it occupied in 1967, as was previously stipulated.

What is new in this policy is that it concedes to the United States a greater role in our area than the one Soviet policy had been willing to give it until 1985. The new Soviet policy recognized "the natural interests" of the United States in exchange for the Soviet Union's limited participation in the settlement process. As I considered the new elements of that policy, it seemed to me that Harold Saunders' 1977 statement that "The lines between the two superpowers have not yet been defined in our [Arab] area" was no longer valid. These lines were defined in favor of the United States. Actually, related conversations with Soviets participating in

the colloquium included unequivocal references to the fact that among the West's conditions for transferring technology to the Soviet Union was that the Soviet Union change its policy in our area, especially that policy which has to do with the immigration of Soviet Jews and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. It is expected, of course, that the elements of this new policy will produce the changes we are seeing now in Soviet relations with international Judaism in general and with the Zionist entity in particular. These changes are being made in compliance with the demands of western Zionism. That, however, is a topic that deserves to be discussed separately.

In the face of the new elements in this policy it would not be difficult for us to expect this policy to cause a decline in Soviet influence in our area. The Soviet Union will also become involved, to a limited degree, in some of our area's affairs. But in trying to determine a role for the Soviet Union, first, and what that country's status will be, second, I tried to project in the colloquium a sequence of scenes that are expected to be played out in the ongoing settlement process. I came to the conclusion that the new Soviet policy requires us to keep in mind the common denominator that our Arab strategy shares with the Soviet Union. Accordingly, our actions toward the Soviet Union must employ a reasonable logic.

Our dealings with the new Soviet policy in our area must stem from a rational view of the Soviet Union today as a world superpower acting to protect its interests. We must see the Soviet Union as a superpower going through a special period in which its leaders are asserting their association with Western civilization. Soviet leaders are setting their sights on the progress achieved by the West because they want to try to attain it. The time has come for us to abandon the delusive, emotional view which, used by "ideologues" and repeated by politicians, spoke about "a friendship that has no other purpose and offers unconditional aid" and so on and so forth. We have to face the real image of the Soviet Union as it is. Actually, the fact that Soviet participants in the colloquium set forth this idea in an unequivocal manner that was often shocking, managed to help the "ideologues" face the shock.

After that, our dealings with the new Soviet policy must be based on common interests. It must be clear that in joining the Soviet Union to explore the Arab-Zionist conflict, our approach is to be based on the threat from the Zionist entity to us in our area and to the Soviet Union as well, given the fact that the Zionist entity is considered a colonial, nuclear base and the fact that racist Zionism has its own unequivocal plans for Soviet Jews. We have to remind Moscow that Israel's Jericho missile, the Israeli satellite and other products of the strategic U.S.-Israeli alliance pose a threat to Soviet security just as they pose a threat to the security of our Arab homeland.

If we adhere to the foregoing, the outcome of our dealings with the Soviet Union will be better. We have great latitude in dealing with the Soviet Union in a world in which there is no alternative to communicating. We have to create effective formulas for an official Arab-Soviet dialogue. We have to create an effective formula like that which exists between the Soviet Union and the West and between it and the Zionist enemy. We must also define the topics of this official dialogue, and we must have these topics arranged according to priorities. These topics must include trade and economic cooperation, official Israeli terrorism, Israel's expansionist policy, Israel's occupation of Arab territory, Zionist plans, Israeli weapons, the immigration of Soviet Jews, and a settlement of the Arab-Zionist conflict. It would be quite beneficial to contemplate what the Soviet Union is saying today in what is being set forth by its scientists. But there will be another discussion of this matter at another time.

MOROCCO

International Banking Center in Tangier Proposed
45190074d Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE in French 31 Mar 89 pp 9-10

[Article by Jamal Amiar: "Omar Akalay's Challenge: Tangier, International Finance Market"]

[Text] It is not necessarily an easy matter to discuss the development of a town or a region, especially when one wants to get away a bit from the usual kinds of discussion, what I would call commercial cafe conversations.

To make things a bit easier for me, I went to see a very special gentleman, discreet, effective, brilliant. And we talked about Tangier. Naturally, we chatted a little about the usual sorts of things: the industrial zone, the free zone, tourism, but we above all talked about a subject more pertinent, more decisive in the mid and long run for the prosperity of not only Tangier and the North, but also of Morocco.

My partner in the discussion was Omar Akalay, the managing director of the Moroccan Deposit and Credit Company, founder of the Association for the Promotion of Tangier, and a member of the Mediterranean Forum.

A brief word on the Mediterranean Forum before going on. We spoke about it a bit in our last issue, but briefly put, it is a study and deliberation group composed of bankers and finance professionals from the seven Western Mediterranean countries. Its objective is to look into cooperation between Southern Europe and the Maghreb after 1 January 1993.

Tangier, 1993

Furthermore, to talk about Tangier, let's look 4 years ahead of us. The attainment of a single European market will affect Europe and the Maghreb's finances and trade

in several ways. Those that are of interest to us are the following: Europe will close itself to the outside world; that is, when in 1993 the European countries eliminate their tariff walls for inter-European trade, the most restrictive of [the existing] measures will be applied to trade with non-EEC [European Economic Community] partners. For example, if Moroccan shirts are taxed at a rate of 30 percent when they enter France and 55 percent on entry into Spain, in 1993 the rate for all of Europe will be 55 percent. Another example: Visas are not required of Moroccans who go to Spain and Italy. This situation will not last long because the most restrictive measure will be applied before 1993. In March 1990 Moroccans will have to have visas for Spain and for Italy; this will be before 1993.

On the other hand, as of 1993 European companies will be more and more interested in delocalizing their production to reduce costs and they will certainly be interested in the Maghreb countries, where some producers' costs are lower.

Lastly—and this above all is the most important point—the most essential and most profitable factor in the mid and long run is the fact that, as of 1993, Europe is supposed to eliminate several of its fiscal paradises and duty-free zones: Jersey, the Channel Islands, and Luxembourg, will no longer be fiscal paradises and a place will be needed close to Europe, close to the Mediterranean, where financial transactions are not taxed and where production is not taxed either, and this on a relatively large scale, larger than that of the Tangier free zone and of Gibraltar, which is handicapped by a lack of space.

This is where Tangier and Morocco come in.

A Unique Opportunity

As Mr Akalay explained to me: "Tangier has a unique opportunity in which history is repeating itself, unique because it is repeating itself."

"There is a myth about Tangier's prosperity and, indeed, Tangier was very wealthy at the time Morocco achieved independence. It was the wealthiest city and region in the country, which, moreover, somewhat explains why we didn't concern ourselves with it very much. There were other things more urgent and which received priority.

"Tangier's wealth was attributable to two factors: After World War II, fear of the USSR prompted European banks to set up offices in Tangier. There were as many as 250 at any given time and people were even teaching their children Russian. Furthermore, Europe before the Treaty of Rome in 1957 was covered with currency exchange offices and it was difficult to move capital directly from one European country to another. It was

faster and easier for a Belgian to buy English merchandise by going through a bank established in Tangier." With Stalin's death and the signing of the Treaty of Rome, Tangier was no longer indispensable.

Today, a surplus of European capital that is looking for a place to go to and where it can be put to work is being created, and Tangier ought to rush in to fill the gap.

The competition will be tough and our competitors already have a lead of several lengths over us. There is, to be sure, Gibraltar, but its status is in doubt. There is for the time being Tunis, where the banks can already borrow in foreign currency and the tax exemption system for foreign exchange transactions is already well-developed, but the Tunisians are still hesitant, and this is where Tangier should take the lead.

Tangier or Tunis

What is a fiscal paradise? Quite simply a place where whoever lives on foreign income pays very low taxes (this is already the case in Morocco where the 1989 Finance Law has reduced the tax rate for people living on foreign pensions), any business that operates with foreign currency does not pay taxes, and any bank that operates with foreign currency does not pay taxes.

In short, the small free zone system must be extended to include the city and the banks.

Between now and 1993 it will be Tangier or Tunis, and this plan, and especially its materialization, will depend on those primarily concerned, not the state or the Ministries of Trade or Finance, but the business community and the people of Tangier.

For it is not as though, if Tangier were to become a fiscal paradise, the state or local communities would not stand to gain from it, on the contrary.

The financial and industrial development of the city would create enormous needs for accessory services: construction, restaurants, trust companies and accountants, urban infrastructure, tourism.

What is at stake with this finance market plan just before the 1990's is clear. This is what the Tunisians think and are preparing for. At the "Financing and Development in the Mediterranean Basin" conference organized in Paris on 13 and 14 March, Mr Ismail Khelil, governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia, insisted on the fact that one of the essential pillars of the Tunisian financial system strategy is "the gradual consolidation of financial liberation to facilitate the emergence of Tunis as a regional finance market." By external financial liberation, he specified, "in addition to the gradual elimination of controls over foreign exchange transactions, we mean opening the local finance market to the fluctuations of the world of international finance, evolution toward

convertibility of the dinar, and the elimination of obstacles to the entry into the local market of foreign financial institutions that agree to participate effectively in national financing." As concerns the banks more particularly, the objective, he added, "is to gradually arrive at a more integrated banking system that will permit each institution to assume a position on the market in keeping with its vocation and its general management strategy. Each financial institution will thus have three windows: one for its commercial activities, a second for its development activities, and a third for offshore activities."

For Tangier, this means becoming a center or a periphery and for Morocco, too, moreover. "If Tangier and Morocco do not get cracking and Tunis wins out, it will be the regionalization of the Moroccan economy, since the one that becomes a finance market will become a European, Maghreb, and African finance market," Mr Akalay added. "This is why I call Tangier the gateway to Europe, not the gateway to Africa. It has been some time now since I wrote our finance minister to propose to him that Tangier replace Beirut. Furthermore, the Arabs and much of their capital are to be found in Andalusia on the Costa del Sol, a region that is the second-largest economic power in the world."

Mr Akalay is, himself, somewhat involved in this battle for Tangier to become this pole, this center. Next May the Mediterranean Forum is to meet in Tangier and the Association for the Promotion of Tangier is going to gradually increase its cultural activities to organize people and disseminate information.

Perhaps the Mediterranean Festival, which every year presents its music, its operas, and its concerts in Nice and Marbella during the summer, will come to Tangier. For Mr Akalay, cultural activities drain the economy.

There will always be something in Tangier, but the stakes today are high and, above all, banks and business firms will establish themselves where international finance market legislation is enacted first.

What should be done? Just as we have formed a committee to promote organization of the World Cup in 1998, we should form a group to deliberate on and support the idea of a finance market and to promote the idea, to sell it. Until it is realized.

Energy Minister Interviewed on Joint Projects

45190074a Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE in French 14 Apr 89 pp 6-7

[Interview with Energy and Mines Minister Mohamed Fettah by Nasreddine El Efrit: "Soviet Union Opens Itself to Morocco"; date and place not given]

[Text] During the past 2 years there has been a great deal of talk about the Soviet Union in connection with a very big project: the Mjara dam, which will be the biggest dam ever built in Morocco. But the talks have seemed to be

dragging on and some sources have advanced the name of Spain, which would replace the Soviet Union for the realization of this project. In the mining sector the Soviet Union has a great interest in phosphates, specifically in the fertilizers derived from them.

More intensive utilization of fertilizers would indeed improve Soviet agriculture's yields. This interest in phosphates was manifested with regard to Morocco, among others, through an agreement on the mining of the Meskala deposit. Not only was the project never begun, but the Soviet Union has never been a buyer of Moroccan phosphates.

Trade between the two countries is at present very much out of balance, to the detriment of Morocco.

Some economic entrepreneurs, specifically in the citrus fruit and early vegetable sectors, wish that Morocco would resume its farm product exports to the USSR.

All these questions—and still others—figured on the agenda of the mission that Mr Mohamed Fettah, the minister of energy and mines, has just completed in the USSR and the results were particularly productive. Mr Fettah was kind enough to provide us with the following detailed information on this subject:

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Mr Minister, you have just made a visit to the Soviet Union and you raised a certain number of important projects with the people you spoke to. What were the chief results?

[Fettah] The visit I just made to the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Government was aimed at examining the possibilities of resuming and expanding cooperation between our two countries in the energy and mining sector. On this occasion I was accompanied by the general director of the ONE [National Electricity Office], the director of the ONE Public Works and Equipment Department, and the commercial director of the OCP [Moroccan Phosphates Office] in charge of Eastern Europe. During the same period a mission composed of representatives of the Finance Ministry, Public Works Ministry, and Energy and Mines Ministry went there to examine the financing agreement for Soviet participation in the management of the Mjara project.

My mission was focused on the mining part of the project and the energy part, in terms of both technical collaboration and trade.

We discussed the Meskala agreement. This agreement, which had been signed in 1978, consisted of two parts: commercial and technical. By the terms of this agreement, Morocco was to export phosphates and phosphate byproducts to the Soviet Union.

At the same time the two countries were supposed to cooperate in the mining of the Meskala deposit.

On the occasion of my visit I was therefore able to discuss resumption of this cooperation in terms of the Meskala deposit at the Ministry of Mineral Fertilizers and the Foreign Trade Ministry. It should be remembered that the OCP and the Soviet companies made a general geological study of the area and another, more detailed one. We are at present combining the economic and technical factors to work up the feasibility study.

Meskala Project

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Has there been an agreement on the resumption of the Meskala project?

[Fettah] We invited Soviet specialists to come to Morocco as soon as possible so that they could examine the documentation and the technical provisions prepared by the OCP with a view to resuming this cooperation.

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Did you feel that the Soviets are inclined to resume the project?

Purchase of 800,000 Tons of Moroccan Phosphates

[Fettah] I think that the Soviet Union's determination and desire to realize this project are tangible. What's more, the mission resulted in the conclusion of the first agreement to export Moroccan phosphate ore to the Soviet Union. We reached agreement that starting with 1989 800,000 tons of phosphates will be exported to the Soviet Union this year. Moreover, the Soviet partner expressed the desire to enter into technical and technological cooperation in the phosphate sector. When the first boat is welcomed, the Soviet specialists plan to visit Morocco and the Moroccan installations to familiarize themselves with our units and our techniques; in the other direction, Moroccan experts will make similar visits to Soviet installations.

The Soviet Union has decided to develop technical cooperation with Morocco in the fertilizer and phosphate sector. In my opinion, this is justified by at least two factors: on the one hand, international recognition of the technological progress achieved by the OCP and Moroccan management in the phosphate sector—this is international recognized and established—and, on the other, the Soviet Union's needs for phosphates and phosphate fertilizers, which compel it to develop cooperation with a country that is considered to be one of the leaders in that field. Furthermore, the USSR's needs for these materials largely explain the restrictions that are at present imposed on the exporting of Soviet phosphates to the CEMA [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance] countries as well as the Western countries.

The resumption of collaboration for the mining of the Meskala deposit and especially the first contract for the exportation of phosphates to the Soviet Union must therefore be viewed as very important results of this mission.

Jerada Power Stations...

In the energy sector, I would like to cite the Soviet Union's participation in the call for bids on the power station in Jerada and it is doing so in association with French and German companies. The purpose of the visit was, therefore, to permit ONE technicians to visit units with a capacity similar to the one planned at Jorf Lasfar as well as the equipment manufacturing plants meant for such power stations.

With the help of "perestroyka," these visits were conducted with complete openness and no technical or economic factor was concealed. For one, we were able to visit an industrial unit with complete freedom—if I may say so—we had access to all the technical and economic information, and we saw these installations in operation. I've visited the Soviet Union about 10 times, but this was the first time a visit went off in such an atmosphere....

... and Mjara

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] You also discussed the Mjara power station.... What was decided? It was also at one point a matter of the Soviet Union's realizing the whole project, power station and dam....

[Fettah] The Mjara dam is a very big project that will require an extremely large investment, between 5 and 6 billion dirhams. The dam part of the project and the infrastructure part will require large expenditures in local currency. The project is too big for the Soviet Union to participate in alone. We are at present discussing it with a group composed of Soviet, Italian, Turkish, and Spanish companies. It is this consortium that today constitutes the party we are dealing with to complete all of the technical and financial agreements.

So, at the time of my visit a mission composed of representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Public Works, Energy and Mines, and Trade went to the Soviet Union to discuss the agreement proposed by the USSR to finance its share of the project. The Soviets have proposed an allocation of about 120 million rubles. The terms and rates are the subject of negotiations between the two parties. We have drawn the attention of our Soviet partner, specifically the ministry in charge of foreign economic relations, to the political nature of this project and the fact that the part of the project entrusted to the Soviet Union constitutes the technological heart of the project and that the Soviet Union ought to at this time take into consideration Morocco's determination to consolidate our relations so that the funds to be appropriated are granted and are competitive in comparison with those proposed by the other European partners in connection with this project.

The talks have been moving forward and considerable progress has been made. A Soviet mission is soon to come to our country to finalize the agreement.

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] One might suppose that the Moroccan electronuclear program figured on the agenda of the talks....

[Fettah] We presented to our Soviet partners in the discussion Morocco's vision in the nuclear power sector, that is, the creation, now in progress, of a center for research on nuclear techniques in the Rabat region and a study of the feasibility of an initial phase, which is nearing completion. But we didn't raise the possibility of cooperation in this sector because we think that it's perhaps too soon from the Moroccan standpoint to enter into discussions on this subject with any partner whomsoever.

Bituminous Shale: the Energy of the Future

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Shale no longer seems to be on the agenda....

[Fettah] Oh yes it is. During the same period there was a delegation from the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the ONE and the ONAREP [National Agency for Petroleum Research and Production] that had visited a thermal unit that burns shale. We are, at present, in fact concentrating our efforts on developing shale for the purpose of direct burning to produce electrical energy. Together with Belgium, we have completed an initial feasibility study; a second study is in progress involving basic tests, this one with the Soviet Union, and the mission that came to this country has visited the unit that burns shale and has also tried to evaluate the results of Moroccan experiments with the burning of shale on the basis of the samples sent there by our country. A third study is at present being conducted along the same lines to produce electrical energy from the direct burning of shale.

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Would the energy thus produced be competitive in terms of the current price of oil?

[Fettah] I believe that competitiveness in economic terms cannot be assured today. But what the ministry has in mind in this sector is a vision for the future. As you know, we have over 100 billion cubic meters of shale in Morocco. Shale is considered to be the energy of the future. Therefore, everything we are doing today in the way of projects to realize a small 15-megawatt pilot unit that will cover the needs of a given region will also serve to improve our knowledge of the field and to develop a national technology to better prepare ourselves for mining the shale when the time comes.

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] How will its purchases of Moroccan phosphates be paid for by the Soviet Union?

[Fettah] In dollars and at the international price.

Soviet Market: First Fruits of Opening

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] Many Moroccan businessmen, particularly those dealing in farm products, followed your visit with great interest because they hope that the Soviet market will be opening to them, perhaps through a clearing agreement....

[Fettah] That is a sector that has not been forgotten. At the time of my visit I drew [the Soviets'] attention to our trade deficit with the Soviet Union. We at present do not even export a tenth of what we import. Our imports consist chiefly of oil (700,000 to 750,000 tons) and also nitrate fertilizers and potassium. I was, therefore, very insistent with my Soviet counterparts in the talks with regard to the imperative need for their buying Moroccan citrus fruits and products in view of the traditional commercial relations that exist between Morocco and the Soviet Union for these products. We reminded them in connection with this that the Soviet Union defends the principle of equilibrium with respect to trade balances. Our Soviet counterparts were receptive to these arguments and they promised us that an effort would be made to find a solution to the problem.

We should add that on the same occasion we ran into Moroccan businessmen who were sounding out the Soviet market, specifically to buy fishing boats.

The Soviet minister in charge of foreign economic relations furthermore commissioned me to invite Moroccan companies to consider the creation of joint companies, either in Morocco or in the Soviet Union, with Soviet partners. I should point out that a certain number of third-country companies are already operational in the Soviet Union in the housing and public works sectors in particular. Once again, this is an indication of the economic and political restructuring the USSR is at present going through.

[LA VIE ECONOMIQUE] So, can we expect a resumption of clearing agreements?

[Fettah] I don't think that clearing agreements are of current interest today. The Soviet Union wants to buy and sell, in foreign currency.

1988 Comeback in Moulouya Cotton Production 45190073c Casablanca AL BAYANE in French 20 Apr 89 p 2

[Text] Oujda—Abandoned since 1971 because of low profitability and heavy parasite infestation, cotton production in the zone around the Moulouya River was resumed in 1986, according to the annual report by the Regional Office for the Agricultural Development of the Moulouya (ORMVAM).

According to the report, the original program called for an area of 300 hectares in the zone, but as finally adopted, it covers 250 hectares, all on the left bank, SOGETA [Agricultural Land Management Company] having canceled 50 hectares.

Sowing covered 259 hectares, or 104 percent of the program, and 55 percent of that sowing was done in April 1988. The variety used was Tadla-16 at a rate of 50 kilograms per hectare.

The area hoed, thinned, and manured totaled 252 hectares.

The number of treatments applied ranged from two to four [as published] of infestation remained generally low.

The report points out that beginning last season, the guaranteed producer price was set as follows:

- Extra quality: (640) dirhams per quintal.
- First quality: 630 dirhams per quintal.
- Second quality: 610 dirhams per quintal.

A timetable for purchases by COMAPRA [Moroccan Company for Marketing Agricultural Products] called for the first round of harvest collection to take place from 21 November 1988 to 9 December 1988.

Two rounds for the collection of marketable production were conducted by COMAPRA. The quantities purchased as of 31 December 1988 totaled 3,600 quintals. A third round took place in January 1989.

Good Harvests Expected From Recent Rainfall 45190074b Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE in French 14 Apr 89 p 13

[Article by M.C.: "Thanks to Recent Rainfall, Harvest Season Is Saved!; It Will Be 'Pretty Good' for Grains, From 'Good to Very Good' for Other Crops"]

[Text] The 1988-89 harvest season is saved! And when we bear in mind the importance of agriculture for the rural world (and for the GDP [gross domestic product]), when we are aware that, because of very freakish weather, Morocco was on the way to a mediocre harvest, it behooves us to breathe a sigh of relief.

During the current season and up until the end of March, the amount of rainfall has been well under the usually recorded average, and this is true for most of the agricultural regions. The amount of rainfall has been low, very localized, and poorly distributed in terms of time. The rain has often been followed by either cold waves or the chergui [the desert winds from the south]. During the first week of February and the first half of March, the chergui had a negative effect on crops.

Particularly as concerns grain cultivation, the weather conditions we described above have slowed down suckering¹ so that the planting of cornfields has been sharply curtailed: The number of ears per surface unit is small.

To boot, this development has resulted in short ears (there won't be much straw this year) with few kernels. Thanks, however, to the latest rainfall, flowering and fertilization should take place under favorable conditions. This, moreover, is what permits the experts who are following the evolution of the season to predict a "pretty good" grain harvest, which would be in the neighborhood of from 40 to 50 million quintals for the four chief grains.

Actually, we should make it clear that in grain cultivation the yield is determined by three factors: planting (or density of ears), the number of kernels per ear, and the weight of the kernels. While freakish weather has negatively affected the first two factors, the third factor will be greatly favored. And if the harvest can be saved, it will be thanks to the weight of the kernels.

While the grain harvest is described as "pretty good" in the experts' predictions, the harvest in general should be from "good to very good," according to the same sources. Thus the legumes, for which much fear was harbored after the waves of chergui, have now been saved and will produce a "pretty good" harvest. The spring crops (sunflower, corn,...) will benefit from "extraordinary conditions"; sugar beets, en bour [unknown term] and irrigated, truck crops, and fruit orchards should also produce "very good" harvests.

And lastly, various sources report improvements in distances covered, which will not fail to benefit cattle.

Most Recent Rainfall

Below are the amounts of rainfall recorded between 2 and 11 April at the principal national meteorological stations (in mm):

Oujda	1
Nador	3.2
Al Hoceima	9
Tetouan	72
Tangier	52
Larache	62.5
Sidi Slimane	56
Kenitra	70
Rabat-Sale	85
Casablanca	52
Nouasseur	60
El-Jadida	40
Meknes	93
Fes	77
Ifrane	164

Taza	115
Safi	36
Essaouira	35
Khouribga	55
Kasbat Tadla	96
Beni-Mellal	73
Marrakech	38
Midelt	12
Bouarfa	18
Errachidia	8
Agadir	27
Sidi Ifni	12
Tan-Tan	1
Tiznit	21
Smara	3
Laayoune	1

Footnote

1. Shoots extended by the main stalk of the plant.

Reservoir Water Levels Lower in 1989

45190074c Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE in
French 14 Apr 89 p 13

[Article: "Reservoirs Less Full Than Last Year, But Shortage Is Being Reduced"]

[Text] We publish below the situation at the dams controlled by the ONE [National Electricity Office] on 10 April and a comparison with the figures recorded on the same date last year. Note that the reserves are declining at all the reservoirs with the exception of the one at the Moulay Hassan II Dam (Ait Aadel Dam), which had been filling with water in 1988. This situation perfectly describes the rainfall pattern this year, less generous than in 1988. But it is interesting to note that the gap is being reduced as a result of the rainfall the country has had since 15 March. Of course, the situation at the reservoirs in the southern part of the country will not be radically transformed because they are full. On the other hand, a very sharp improvement should be noted in major dam construction: Al Massira, Bin el Ouidane, Mohammed V Oued el Makhazine, and Idriss the First.

Another factor that gives rise to optimism: the abundant snowfall that will ensure maintenance of the reserves throughout the spring and even part of the summer.

Dam	10 Apr 89 Mm ³	Fill Rate %	10 Apr 88 Mm ³	Fill Rate %
Bin el Ouidane	746	53.8	1,000	72.2
Al Massira	1,444	53	1,640	60.2
Mohammed V	161	32.9	283	57.8
Oued El Makhazine	552	69.9	575	72.9
El Kansera	152	55.6	239	87.4
Idriss the First	238	19.7	532	44.1
Lalla Takerkoust	69	95	71	98.2
Mansour Eddahbi	531	97.3	545	99.8
Moulay Youssef	189	98.6	190	99
Moulay Hassan the First	248	91	204	74.8
Total	4,331	54.4	5,279	66.3

OMAN

Economic Investment with Iran Discussed 44040401D Muscat 'UMAN in Arabic 16 Mar 89 p 2

[Article by 'Abd Allah Hassan and Talib Al-Mu'ammari: "Iran's Undersecretary of Foreign Trade and President of the Chamber and its Members Discuss Investment and Economic Cooperation Between the Private Sectors in the Two Countries"]

[Excerpts] The Joint Oman-Iran Commission held its first official session yesterday at al-Ghubrah guesthouse. The Omani side was chaired by minister of commerce and industry Salim 'Abd Allah AL-Ghazali. His Excellency Bahzad Nabawi, minister of heavy industry in the Islamic Republic of Iran, chaired the Iranian delegation. [passage omitted]

Iran's undersecretary of foreign trade, Khosrow Taj, following the first session of the Joint Oman-Iran Commission, met with Maqbul ibn Sultan, president of the Oman chamber of commerce and industry, at chamber headquarters. The meeting was attended by Shaykh Ya'qub ibn Hamad al-Harithi, vice president of the chamber, Shaykh Salim ibn Sa'id Al-Fannah al-'Uraymi, treasurer, and chamber directors Shaykh Suhayl ibn Salim Bahwan; Salim ibn 'Abd Allah al-Rawwas; engineer Habib ibn 'Abd al-Nabi Makki; 'Abdallah ibn Husayn Baqir; and Jum'ah ibn Husayn al-Nu'aimi. Also in attendance were chamber executive director Ahmad ibn Sulayman Muhammad and a number of Omani businessmen. Members of the Iranian entourage of the undersecretary also attended.

At start of the meeting, chamber president Maqbul ibn 'Ali Sultan welcomed the visiting Iranian delegation and emphasized that it is important for the two sides to meet and discuss avenues of mutual economic cooperation. He alluded to the meetings of the Oman-Iran Joint

Commission. He said that the commission's subcommittees are exploring means of economic, commercial, and transportation cooperation. The Iranian undersecretary of foreign trade has made it a point to visit the chamber to meet with Omani businessmen and exchange views on issues of mutual cooperation.

*Khasru Taj, undersecretary of foreign trade in the Islamic Republic of Iran, then spoke to thank officials of the chamber and express his happiness, and that of his delegation, at visiting the sultanate to identify investment opportunities and to solidify economic cooperation between the two countries. He said, "We visit the sultanate within the framework of the Oman-Iran Joint Commission." He emphasized the importance of cooperation between the sultanate and Iran through both private and public sectors and said that visits were an opportunity to acquaint Omani businessmen with the various aspects of economic activity in Iran.

The Iranian undersecretary of foreign trade added that the Omani private sector could participate in current reconstruction in Iran in the aftermath of the ceasefire. Omani construction companies could submit tenders for reconstruction projects to help with that effort in Iran.

He added. "We offer the Omani private sector several investment opportunities, especially in productive agriculture and in heavy industries such as mining, electricity, and energy. Iran has an abundance of the raw materials and human resources required for development. We need machinery and equipment as well as modern technology. We welcome exports and imports and the exchange of goods with friendly countries."

He pointed out that Iran is currently bolstering relations with Islamic countries. For instance, the volume of trade between Iran and Turkey has increased lately. In the past, we depended on oil as a major source of income,

and the government has expended most oil revenues on services. Certain farm and industrial products are now being exported and account for about 15 percent of Iranian foreign sales.

In response to a question on current investment opportunities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iranian undersecretary of foreign trade told the president and members of the chamber that Iran welcomes all investment and shares profits from productive projects with investors once the output is exported. He said opportunities were available in fruit packaging and canning. Iran produces about 15 million tons of fruit annually but exports no more than 200,000 tons. Iranian textiles and clothes are also of good quality and there are opportunities to invest in their manufacture using modern equipment. He added that the government allows the Iranian private sector to engage in export and import and to use hard currency export revenues to purchase foreign goods.

Agricultural Organizations, Policies Reported
44040374 *Manama AL-MAWAQIF in Arabic*
3 Apr 89 p 6-9

[Interview with Mr Sa'id ibn Nasir al-Khusaybi, head of the Public Authority for Marketing Agricultural Produce, by Mansur Radi, in Oman, date not specified; first paragraph is AL-MAWAQIF introduction]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted]

Mr Sa'id al-Khusaybi has served the sultanate in more than one position, for he has been deputy minister of information, then assistant to the governor of Dhofar. He is knowledgeable of all the intricacies of the work of the authority, and is its actual dynamo. He has been able, with his great administrative expertise and competence, to enable this authority to take its proud place among the effective authorities of the sultanate. Moreover he advanced the work of this authority until it occupied first place on the Arab level, and gained first place as the best agricultural marketing agency in relation to all the companies, agencies, and individuals, whether local or foreign, which work in the field of agricultural marketing in the Arab world. While I was in the sultanate, I took the opportunity to hold this interview with him in his office in Oman. The details of the interview follow.

[AL-MAWAQIF] When was the Public Authority for Marketing Agricultural Produce established? What are its goals?

[Al-Khusaybi] The Public Authority for Marketing Agricultural Produce was established in November 1981 in accordance with Royal Decree 81/97, following a study made by the government of the sultanate to determine the volume of production and the extent of the market. This study revealed how much need there was for such an authority and for creating a modern system for marketing, storage, and distribution.

As for the goals of the authority, they can be expressed as the achievement of the following:

1. Encouraging Omani farmers to increase their production of fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products by establishing a system for marketing this produce.
2. Guaranteeing the availability of these products in the local markets in the amount demanded and at appropriate prices in accordance with what is required by the public interest.
3. Operating as a link between the farmers and the commercial sector by creating a highly efficient marketing network.
4. Working to create marketing outlets to sell the produce of Omani farmers and to encourage them to grow high-quality produce.
5. Working to improve the present marketing situation with respect to Omani products relating to quantity and quality and making them available in the markets.

[AL-MAWAQIF] Is the Public Authority for Marketing Produce autonomous, or is it under the Ministry of Commerce or the Ministry of Agriculture?

[Al-Khusaybi] The Public Authority for Marketing Agricultural Produce is an autonomous authority, independent in the running of its daily affairs. The executive chairman of the authority oversees the implementation of its plans, in accordance with Royal Decree 81/97, and it has a board of directors presided over by the minister of commerce and industry, with the minister of agriculture and fisheries as vice president. In addition, there are 10 members, namely: the minister of state the wali of Dhofar; the adviser to his majesty the sultan and secretary general of the development council; the deputy of financial affairs; the president of the chamber of commerce and industry of Oman; the wali of Nazwa; the wali of Suhar; the director general of financial and administrative affairs in the ministry of commerce and industry; the director general of commerce in the ministry of commerce and industry; the director general of agriculture in the ministry of agriculture and fisheries; in addition to the executive president of the agency.

[AL-MAWAQIF] Does the authority have centers for the collection and marketing of produce in all regions of the sultanate, or does it limit its operations to the capital only?

[Al-Khusaybi] The authority has five distribution centers around the sultanate, namely the Salalah center, the Nazwa center, the Suhar center, the Barka' center, and the Suwayq center. It also has 12 produce collection centers distributed throughout the sultanate, and all these centers are furnished with refrigerated storerooms. The authority also has a fleet of refrigerated trucks of various capacities. However, the main center is the

Muscat center, and all the produce received from the other centers comes to this one, and of course the largest storage capacity of refrigerators is found at this center.

We also have a unit for ripening bananas at this center. Besides that, there is the pickling unit, and we also have a laboratory, which of course tests the produce for quality, before it is sold, directly upon its arrival from the centers. If the product has been exposed to any diseases or pests, we halt it and inform the agricultural extension centers of the Ministry of Agriculture, at the same time informing the farmer.

We conduct some experiments, and we have a department of research and statistics, which the laboratory is under. Good ideas and experiments are always adopted, and we are currently carrying out two experiments. The first is extracting alcohol from frankincense, and the second is making candles from frankincense. These are preliminary experiments, because the quantity of frankincense is still large, and of course the Omani society uses it by burning it as incense in homes. However, as I said, there are other uses that can be derived from this product.

As for the pickling unit, it is small, and it is not like a complete factory in its installations. A number of Omani women have been trained work in it, and this unit produces various kinds of pickles. These kinds have come to be in demand in the Omani market, and at the same time they reduce the amount of products that spoil, since Oman has abundant crops, and large amounts come to us during the production seasons; moreover the heat subjects the produce to spoilage, unless we sell it unceasingly or store it or process it. Therefore, in the center we carry out this operation continuously.

[AL-MAWAQIF] What is the relationship between the authority and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries?

[Al-Khudaybi] The relationship is in fact broad, for as you know the Ministry of Agriculture is considered to be the parent, with responsibility for agricultural development in the country, especially with respect to turning out agricultural research and giving agricultural guidance. However, the authority, in accordance with the decree establishing it, enjoys administrative and financial independence. It has a board of directors presided over by his excellency the minister of commerce and industry and the vice president his excellency the minister of agriculture and fisheries. Of course the members of the board are from the public and private sectors, and the authority was given independence in view of the fact that it deals with various groups and so that it would not be bound by bureaucracy. As I said, the relationship is strong, and we always consult and coordinate with the ministry, especially in matters relating to the seeds which are distributed to farmers, and to the crop products which the consumer usually wants, or there are products that are not in demand in the market, and therefore the farmer cannot continue to produce them. Also, as I said,

if some pests or diseases appear in the crops which the authority buys, we must inform the ministry of agriculture by way of the agricultural extension centers around the country. Moreover, coordination meetings are held constantly, which is an indication of the cooperation and coordination. As I said, the nature of the authority differs, for we are involved in agricultural marketing in the form of a center, and the ministry of course has other jurisdictions, but without coordination with the ministry we would not be able to attain this level of services. In addition, we coordinate directly with the Bank of Oman for Agriculture and Fisheries, which grants facilitated loans to many farmers, especially farmers who get loans, for there is coordination between us and them, because this farmer must produce and sell his crops to the authority, and thus the bank can obtain the amounts and the credit owed by any of these farmers, so coordination is always there.

[AL-MAWAQIF] With regard to marketing, is the authority's function limited to local marketing, or to foreign marketing?

[Al-Khusaybi] There is a paragraph in the decree establishing the authority that deals with exporting surplus agricultural produce. Of course the lofty goal of establishing the authority was to cover first of all the crop needs of the local market, and we try to provide produce of good quality at appropriate prices. If the needs of the market are exceeded, of course we export. We have already begun the process of exporting, because we often get large quantities in certain production seasons. The processed products are already abundant, such as lemons, dates, and frankincense, for they are plentiful. We are currently exporting to the United Arab Emirates since it is the closest country to us, and we have also exported quantities to Kuwait, and there is a national establishment in fraternal Bahrain to which we export some products, inasmuch as a delegation from the establishment visited the authority through the Gulf fair that was held in Bahrain last year.

Thank God, we have begin to export, though of course not in large commercial quantities because we are just beginning. Our start in the field of exporting to the Gulf region bodes well, and we hope, God willing, that we will be able to export more of our local produce to the Gulf markets.

[AL-MAWAQIF] What kinds of agricultural produce are being exported?

[Al-Khusaybi] With regard to fresh produce, there is demand for melons, watermelons, limes, and tomatoes, which yield well in Oman, and these products have specific seasons. Currently lemon tea is being exported, it being dried lemon which we made as a substitute for tea, which has already met with great interest and demand in Bahrain and Kuwait, and which we are now exporting tea under trade names.

[AL-MAWAQIF] What about Omani dates?

[Al-Khusaybi] With regard to dates, the date packaging plants are still under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Our dealings in marketing dates have to do with distributing them, and we deal with the factories in buying quantities of dates of various sizes. There is already a strong interest in marketing dates, and we supply any request for export that we get if they are available. If they are not, we call the date plants under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries about providing the required amounts, but from the administrative and technical aspect they are essentially still subject to the ministry, and they carry out the export operations of these dates.

Through participation in foreign fairs, whether at the regional or international level, we always get many orders for dates. Thank God our brothers in the plants are cooperative: we only have to specify the required amount; prices and quality have been agreed upon. We ask for and sell any amount that is ordered through the authority, and if an order is made directly to the plants, they take care of it. What is important is the result alone, and that this crop be marketed commercially outside of the sultanate.

[AL-MAWAQIF] Does marketing fish also come under the authority?

[Al-Khusaybi] No. We are not involved in marketing fish, because there is the Omani National Fish Company, which is in charge of this operation. We oversee the operation of marketing cattle, for as you know, there are large numbers of cattle in Oman, specifically in the southern region. To encourage the breeders, the state buys the cattle according to a subsidy paid on the price of a kilo bought and the price of a kilo sold. The authority is only in charge of the subsidizing operation by contract with a company, which is what buys the required numbers of cattle from the breeders, and we pay the price difference in buying and selling. This matter comes within the current 5-year plan until 1990, and every year we allocate a specific amount. The goal is to reduce the large numbers of cattle on the pastures in the southern region, as large numbers affect the plants, especially since the southern region enjoys the beauty of nature, especially in the autumn. We have been proceeding with this project since last year, since it used to be under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, but because the authority is involved in marketing, and this is a marketing area, the state included it in the authority. Thank God things are going well with regard to cattle marketing, especially since we are approaching the month of Ramadan, for the tendency then is always towards local consumption of cattle.

[AL-MAWAQIF] To what extent do Omani agricultural products cover the needs of the local market?

[Al-Khusaybi] In season, the products cover the needs of the local market and more. We do not have precise figures, but there is now support for and thought of performing a study on the needs of the local market, and on the costs of production and quantities produced. This is an operation that will last a long time, especially when we come to estimate the cost of production, because the farmer often comes and says that he is always operating at a loss, if he planted and harvested and put a lot of effort and toil into the farm, for he sees prices fluctuating. So he always feels that he is losing. Now the board of directors has decided that the authority will conduct a long-term study on production costs at the sultanate level, and this will give us an indication of the cultivated area, as well as of the market's needs for products, for it is obvious that we suffer from a lack of coordination in this area. For example, in the tomato season you see a large surplus in the growing of tomatoes, and everybody is growing tomatoes, which leads to a surplus that cannot be used because of the lack of canning plants. Since the season for growing this crop is three months, it is economically unfeasible to build a plant. Also because the tomato season coincides with those in neighboring states, they cannot be exported. All these factors cause us trouble. Therefore, we are trying to get precise reports and data which would confirm and clarify the costs of production, the needs of the market, the current price policy, and whether the authority is proceeding in a sound manner, especially with respect to receiving the produce and processing and exporting it. All these factors seem to me to be linked to one another in this study, and we hope that we will complete it soon, God willing.

[AL-MAWAQIF] Agriculture has now become an industry, and there are agricultural industries in many of the European countries and some of the countries of the Third World, since they do not depend on the season for producing any crop; rather they depend on growing any crop throughout the year. Do you have such a plan in the authority?

[Al-Khusaybi] Yes. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries performed a study recently about establishing an agricultural processing complex that would include the processing of tomatoes, lemons, dates, "busur" (a kind of beverage), and date scraps. These things were all placed under an integrative study. It has been put up for bid already to various specialist consultative companies, whereby they would present their studies and ideas and then the concerned ministry would make its decision regarding the establishment of this complex, whether it should be built by the private sector or by the government sector, so as to take its natural place when later converted. These things were all studied, taking into consideration the fact that the sultanate, as I said, is approaching large-scale agricultural production. As his exalted majesty the sultan said during his latest tour, in 8 or 10 years the sultanate of Oman will be self-sufficient in the agricultural sector. Therefore this plan is long-range. The ministry realizes this, and we are doubtless interested in building such a complex since the amounts

that come to us there will reduce the amount of spoilage that we would have. Moreover, if they were processed, they would be marketable in the local markets, or perhaps they would be exported abroad.

[AL-MAWAQIF] Is there some kind of coordination between the states of the Cooperation Council with respect to the marketing of agricultural produce or the exchange of expertise in this field?

[Al-Khusaybi] Several establishments have visited the authority, including establishments from Kuwait, as well as some of our brothers in Bahrain, some of whom deal in buying and dealing in foodstuffs. I cannot say that there is much coordination in this area. Coordination is somewhat scanty, because agricultural marketing, in my opinion, does not enjoy the necessary interest. Perhaps the reason for the lack of corresponding establishments like those here in the Sultanate of Oman, is that those states turned directly to the private sector and neglected those establishments and companies that deal in things relating to agricultural marketing and did not subsidize them. However, we still expect that the general secretariat of the Cooperation Council will adopt the idea of a meeting of officials on marketing in the GCC states, at least from the aspect of exchange of points of view. For, as I mentioned, the crop production seasons are similar in the Gulf states, and if all the states of the council grew a particular crop in a particular season there would be a surplus, and where would this produce be marketed? Don't forget that there is strong competition from European production, and I do not think that they would leave us room to market our agricultural produce, especially when we export it by air since it would be very expensive, and few of the products are subsidized.

It seems that these issues need to be coordinated in the GCC [Gulf Corporation Council] states and that we might be able to make bigger plans in the area of agricultural marketing at the level of the GCC states.

[AL-MAWAQIF] With respect to marketing Gulf agricultural produce, will it be done through this authority, or through other agencies?

[Al-Khusaybi] When any company or state asks to import agricultural produce, we would take on this role if the request concerned us directly, because it is part of our function. However, if requests are made through other companies, of course they would be the ones to do that, since commercial transaction is free, and they are free to choose the agency that will do the marketing, and the manner in which it is done. But we have noticed now that we are already getting requests, because we have begun to participate in more activities and fairs. This has had an effect, and many of the natives of the GCC states are making visits to the sultanate continuously and are becoming acquainted with the activities of the authority and with the associated marketing system. This gives

them some sort of incentive to deal with the authority, and in the past 2 years there has been much business between us and the establishments of the Gulf states.

QATAR

Industries To Develop National Economy Discussed

44040329d Doha AL-'ARAB in Arabic 21 Feb 89 p 5

[Text] Economic and development plans and programs in the state of Qatar have been guided by the pertinent directives of the man who assumed leadership on 22 Feb, his highness Shaykh Khalifah Ibn-Hamad Al Thani, the emir of the country, ever since they raised their ambitious banners aiming to reach a stage—a balanced economy—on the basis of choosing industry as the gateway to building a solid, productive foundation, and establishing many petroleum industries and basic industrial projects that have high productivity capable of continuation, growth, and competition in foreign markets.

The intended goals of industrialization policy in Qatar are laid down and given shape by his highness the beloved emir in his statement in this respect:

"In our opinion the industrialization projects are something important, representing the cornerstone in building our nation, and we have taken the road of industrialization and set up its programs because we do not want to expose ourselves to economic risks in the future. Perhaps the most important safeguard in this respect is working to diversify the sources of our income through building a solid industrial base, because that would gradually lessen our dependence on oil."

Industrial Complexes

Because of the persistent efforts that the state put forth to achieve a balanced economy and diversification of sources of national income, the well-studied plans and programs implemented by the government agencies overseeing the growth and development of the industrial sector realized many stages and levels of industrial fundamentals: namely, a broad series of industrial laws, monetary incentives, and customs waivers were obtained, and infrastructure services of water, electricity, and communications were provided at appropriate incentive prices. In addition, many industrial complexes and zones were built, furnished with all requirements and necessary services. The most notable of the industrial zones in Qatar is embodied in three integrated complexes, two of which are located in the Umm-Sa'id zone, the first for heavy industries and the second for medium industries. The third zone, which is for light industries, is west of the city of Doha on the Salwa road, and it contains most of the industrial projects belonging to the private sector.

The Umm-Sa'id zone is considered the foremost industrial zone in Qatar, and it represents a huge industrial shield since it includes heavy industries, petrochemical and iron and steel complexes, and complexes for liquifying natural gas. As for the other industrial complexes, they enjoy many government incentives encouraging the private sector to invest and participate in establishing and operating many light consumer industries, which subsequently realize economic returns that guarantee lowering of the bill for goods imported from abroad.

Series of National Industries

Oil Refining

The current capacity of the three refineries in the state is 962,000 barrels, that after the new refinery in Umm-Sa'id with a capacity of 50,000 barrels a day was put into operation at the start of 1984. This refinery meets local needs, whereas surplus refined quantities are exported to world markets, and thus self sufficiency has been achieved with respect to Qatar's needs for refined products for the foreseeable future, keeping in mind that local consumption is currently about 12,000 barrels a day of refined products.

An outcome of the accomplishments in the field of refining was a great increase in the production of the National Oil Distribution Company (NODCO) during the past year, since the total of what the refinery produced was 12.1 million barrels of various high grade petroleum products, an increase of 15 percent over the previous production rates. The goal was to meet the increasing demand for local products in implementation of confirmed export contracts with the Qatari Public Oil Establishment, and to form strategic reserves that would suffice local consumption of petroleum products for a period of more than about 2 months. Moreover, sales figures of the oil company (NODCO) rose during 1988, reaching 650.0 million riyals, or an increase of 18 percent over the previous year, and the volume of petroleum products exported during the same period was 7.6 million barrels.

There are pioneering projects to develop production overseen by the Qatari Public Oil Establishment, including extending two of the pipelines which link the refinery to the oil docks in the port of Umm-Sa'id, one for refined products and local distribution and the other for exporting products in excess of the need of the local market. It is expected that exported quantities will double in the future after these two lines go into full operation, something which will give the refinery operation company a larger capacity, and give the country additional income. In addition, it will improve the performance of the refinery from the technical and economic aspects, for extending pipes linking the refinery in Umm-Sa'id to the new Doha repository existing in the Abu-Hamur zone completely will do away with transporting products from the refinery by means of tankers, and improve the

economics of transporting products to workers and consumers, and avoid the risks which might arise from using tankers to transport of the products over long distances; moreover, it will facilitate supplying the airport with fuel needed to supply airplanes and raise the level of storage of various petroleum products, which adds a good dimension to the strategic reserves which ensure the country's need for a sufficient period.

Chemical Fertilizers

The Qatar Chemical Fertilizer Company (QAFCO) continued its excellent performance in the production of ammonia and urea last year, and it struck new records that surpassed the projected capacity by high rates. The volume of sales of ammonia for 1987 rose to reach new records, though the volume of ammonia sales for the same year dropped by about 100,000 tons because of the drop in the price of urea in world markets, so the company made great efforts to guide production and lower costs to counter the probable losses arising from lowering prices.

Iron and Steel

The Qatar Iron and Steel Company (QASCO) maintained its level of performance in production, which saw only slight fluctuations during the past year, in that its production of steel wool dropped by only 1 percent, and bulk steel by about 3 percent, but in contrast to that its production of steel reinforcing rods rose by 2 percent.

QASCO is still operating at a seasonal productive capacity that greatly exceeds projected productive capacity, since this percentage rose from 100 percent during 1987 to about 153 percent in 1988.

Internationally, QASCO is considered an exemplary company in the field of efficiency of operation and utilization of projected capacity. QASCO's sales of reinforced rods have seen an increase of 1.4 percent in 1988 with respect to quantity, against a slight drop in the value of sales of 1.7 percent, whereas the company's sales of local rods during the past year saw a large increase of 22 percent, and the number of rods exported abroad remained within its previous amounts without any increase worth mentioning.

Petrochemicals

As for the Qatar Petrochemicals Company, its production of ethylene reached its highest rate since operations began, reaching 362,687 metric tons, or 93.8 percent of projected capacity.

The company produced 173,891 tons of polyethylene, or 124 percent of projected capacity. Sulphur production recorded record figures since production began at the plant, up to 48,211 tons, or 104.8 percent of projected capacity.

We mention here that production last year recorded a remarkable development at high percentages of projected capacities, which distinguished it from previous years. As a result, sales of ethylene in the past year recorded an increase in volume of 24 percent over the previous rates, though the volume of polyethylene sold recorded a drop of 15.36 percent; however the price of a ton recorded a noticeable rise, which made up for the percentage drop in the amount sold of this substance. With regard to sulphur, its price dropped internationally, which caused a drop in sales of 27.71 percent to occur.

Liquefying Natural Gas

The Qatari Public Oil Establishment oversees the operation of two plants for liquids of natural gas in Musay'id, and the production of this huge complex which began production in 1981 saw growing rates in comparison to its projected capacities which are 2,370 tons of propane a day, 1,750 tons of butane, 1,750 tons of condensed gases, and about 2,495 tons of ethane enriched gas.

Cement Industry

The cement industry in Qatar, which is the oldest of the national industries, has a widespread reputation due to the quality of the specifications of its production. The Qatar National Cement Manufacturing Company has accomplished much, especially in the field of expanding production. It is currently operating three plants which produce ordinary cement, portland cement, and salt resistant cement, as opposed to a single plant when production started up in 1969. The productive capacity of the company's three furnaces during the past year was about 330,000 tons of all kinds.

Light Industries

In addition to the previous structural industries, the two states in cooperation with the private sector set up a broad series of medium and light industries that included projects of organic fertilizers, quicklime, and plants to manufacture cleaners, cardboard, dyes, clothing, paper, and plastic, in addition to processing milk and its derivatives and manufacturing home furnishings, glass, and electrical appliances. The most important of the operating industries are:

- **Flour Milling:** The flour mill company began operations in 1972 with private sector capital, and it works to produce and supply local consumption needs for flour and bran, such that the annual capacity is around 30,000 tons of flour, semolina, and bran.
- **Organic Fertilizer:** The organic fertilizer plant began production in 1977 under the oversight of the Ministry of Home Affairs with the purpose of converting waste products into organic fertilizer and providing 70 tons of organic fertilizer a day for improving agriculture.

- **Paper and Plastics Factories:** The Paper and Plastics Factories Company, which is private sector, undertakes to supply the country's needs of paper and plastic for wrapping and packaging. Twenty-two establishments manufacture plastics, while more than 20 establishments manufacture paper.
- **Cleaners Industry:** The Qatari Cleaners Company, which is a company belonging to the private sector, provides the needs of local consumption for high quality cleaners. Its annual production is around 9,000 tons of powders and 18,000 tons of liquid cleaners.
- **New Projects:** The industrial establishment, which oversees industrial development, awarded many licenses. During the past year around 15 licenses were given to establish and set up various industrial projects, including the manufacture of plastic bags, oil and water dyes, heat and sound proof glass, various electrical appliances, motor and lubricating oils, and home furnishings.

The possibility of setting up a new industrial zone in the north of the state of Qatar, earmarked for heavy industry, is being studied, as is the manufacture of plaster of paris, since the raw materials are abundant and readily exploited.

Industrial Cooperation Within the Framework of the Cooperation Council

The states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, from an economic point of view, form a homogeneous economic group that is unique in that their economic resources are similar in many respects, and still depend to a large extent on incomes of oil and gas to finance internal development projects and cover the costs of foreign trade.

Persistent joint efforts of the states of the GCC [Gulf Corporation Council] during the years since the establishment of the council in 1981 have helped to attain various levels in the field of economic integration between the states of the council. An ambitious formula for industrial cooperation has taken form, it being the most important of the articles of cooperation, since industrial production is the sector most capable of supplying the economic structure and absorbing the labour force in the member states.

Out of the sincere, joint desire of the GCC states for the success of the course of economic cooperation in a phased and balanced way, the state of Qatar has participated with complete satisfaction, in the meetings of the industrial cooperation committee, which was charged firstly with making a complete review of the industrialization policies existing among the member states, and secondly with coordinating industrial activity towards newly planned horizons, so that they would be distributed over the member states according to relative properties and economic feasibility, in addition to making

appropriate arrangements to import technology and expand training programs and technical and professional qualifying to benefit the national cadres working in the states of the council.

SUDAN

Economic Minister Discusses Economic, Trade Relations

45040295 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
7 Apr 89 pp 46-47

[Interview with 'Abdallah Muhammad Ahmad: "Flood Disaster Cost Us \$12 Billion!"; date and place not specified; first four paragraphs are AL-HAWADITH introduction]

[Text] Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade 'Abdallah Muhammad Ahmad told AL-HAWADITH that the wave of floods last summer destroyed Sudan's basic structure and now the country is in need of \$12 billion for reconstruction. The government has formed a national commission to look for sources of financing.

He expressed his country's appreciation, government and people alike, for Saudi Arabia's positions under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, toward Sudan during those difficult times the country went through, the flood and torrential rain disaster in particular. Moreover, the Saudi monarch's instructions to offer material and moral support from the Saudi people to Sudan during the disaster have left a good and palpable impression among people in all walks of life and have played a key role in softening the blow and in aiding government efforts to assist flood victims throughout Sudan.

He described Saudi-Sudanese relations as being as old as the two countries' history and their fraternal peoples, and that they are special in all fields, adding that their stability demonstrates that they are based on deep-rooted fundamental principles that bespeaks the intent of the leadership in both countries to advance them and foster their development now and in the future.

The above was stated in the context of the following interview:

[AL-HAWADITH] What economic course of action does the current government intend to pursue?

[Ahmad] The course of action is to expand the circle of economic and trade relations with Arab and Islamic countries that do not impose on our country any particular political edict. We started this process by reaching an agreement with Saudi Arabia to reframe the economic and trade protocol between the two countries, especially since the previous agreement is in need of study and development. Committees from both countries will hold

meetings at a later date to discuss worthy and detailed matters, for Saudi Arabia ranks number one in trade relations with respect to Sudan.

Our principal needs at this time are centered around oil, fertilizers, machinery, trucks, harvesters, plows, and other equipment, given the fact that the corn crop in Sudan this year is estimated at 5 to 7 million tons and requires highly automated technology rather than primitive methods of harvesting.

Estimates show that the people need no more than 3 million tons of corn, and the rest can be stored or marketed. The problem, however, is finding silos and transportation fleets for shipping inside and outside the country.

[AL-HAWADITH] We hear a lot about demonstrations and disturbances stemming from bad economic conditions. What is the truth about the economic situation in Sudan?

[Ahmad] Sudan's economy has major problems and we are now trying to correct its course. The previous regime headed by Ja'far al-Numayri encumbered Sudan with agreements and loans that were used not in development but in other non-productive fields. That is why we are now suffering from debt inflation and resultant huge usurious profits. The present debt is estimated at over \$10 billion, and the interest on this debt is growing at approximately \$1 billion a year. The al-Numayri government borrowed at very high interest rates of between 10 and 20 percent. The other problem is that Sudan is surrounded by poor nations rife with political and economic problems that have compelled over 3.5 million refugees to migrate to it, and these refugees represent a burden on the Sudanese economy. Moreover, the neighboring countries themselves have grown more dependent on our domestic trade and our domestic output due to their failure to import or produce their needs. Add to that the severe 1984 drought that caused the destruction of a large area of agricultural land and the death of millions of livestock or, in other words, the loss of our country's animal wealth. Right now we only have 60 million head of goats, camels, and cows. Then came the rain and floods with a force the country had not known for 50 years, destroying agricultural land and production sites in general, as well as the basic structure, as we have already said.

The crucial factor that has hurt our entire country politically, economically, socially and in terms of security is the war raging in the south as a result of the rebellion, insurgency and repudiation of the country's national unity, as well as the sovereignty, safety and tranquility of the Sudanese people. This war has wiped out the greater part of our economy, for it is not a war between Sudan—the legitimate government—and a faction of the Sudanese citizenry, but one that is directed by different foreign interests wishing to transfer the Lebanese events that have threatened the country's national

unity and sovereignty to the middle of Africa, choosing Sudan as a fulcrum for their plan. Colonialist monopolistic companies would like tension to persist in order to preserve their privileges in the middle of Africa. The intelligence services of certain western and eastern countries alike, most significantly Cuba, are collaborating with them and have taken Ethiopia as their take-off center. There are training camps and some of the strongest radio stations, heard as far away as Latin America, vilifying Sudan and its people and casting doubt over its national unity.

By and large, the war has its many burdens because we in Sudan are not only fighting rebel John Garang, but also a number of countries and intelligence systems loaded with money. Moreover, our basic enemy is Israel. I will let you in on a secret. About a month ago a meeting was spotted within the Sudanese borders between the Israeli foreign minister and the insurgency.

[AL-HAWADITH] Do you expect Arab or Islamic countries to come to Sudan's rescue to help Sudan get out of its dilemma?

[Ahmad] Yes. We have gained a measure of support and backing, but the majority are just watching as though the matter does not concern them. They listen to our news on the radio, but they do not even try to find out how we are getting along. Nonetheless, some are presenting us with unfair surrenderist conditions and many of our brothers ask us why we do not accept peace as if we are the ones who want war. We have said that we agree to deal with them under a federalist system even though they are a limited minority. We have also said that they are totally free to govern themselves in any way they see fit, but they insist on one condition only, namely to abolish the Islamic shari'ah rule over the Muslims in the north who have accepted this rule for themselves. But they fancied themselves as centers of power that frighten us so they began imposing on us surrenderist conditions that no legitimate government in the world can accept.

[AL-HAWADITH] A previous agreement had been reached to raise all these issues in a constitutional conference. Are you going to revive this idea?

[Ahmad] Yes. A previous date for the conference had been set for 31 December but they have not yet responded to this invitation. Their first condition, as I have already said, is repeal of the Shari'ah, a cease-fire and repeal of all military agreements with neighboring countries, plus many other unfair conditions. Obviously, they want everything for nothing.

[AL-HAWADITH] What about a military solution?

[Ahmad] We do not advocate a military solution, we advocate negotiations. At the same time, however, we cannot allow the country's sacrosanct issues to be trampled on and we will defend its independence and sovereignty. We will also defend the innocent who are being

killed and violated, because this is the responsibility of the government as a legitimate authority. Let us use the insurgents in Latin America as an example. Have they ever sat with their governments to negotiate and impose their conditions? Nonetheless, we have offered 23 peace initiatives, but their masters who are conducting the war in their names have rejected all of them.

[AL-HAWADITH] Does the government have any priorities in the wake of the new cabinet formation?

[Ahmad] At the political level, the government's trend is to realize the wish of the majority in Sudan by establishing peace without capitulation. At the social and economic level, it wants to achieve self-sufficiency in most of the sectors related to the economy and making a living. The major failing in any society is dependence on others, thus allowing itself to become an instrument of selfish interests. Therefore, our orientation is to intensify our efforts domestically to achieve self-sufficiency wherever possible. The first commodity to achieve self-sufficiency will be wheat, God willing, followed by medicine. We have set a 2-year time limit for this. We are also seeking to tie ourselves economically and commercially to willing kindred Arab, Islamic and African countries by exchanging interests and fair dealings without intervention in the internal affairs of anyone. Furthermore, we refuse to be party to any security arrangements, any international conflicts or any military axes or arrangements.

[AL-HAWADITH] Do you have any border plans with neighboring countries?

[Ahmad] We do not want to rush into discussions of unionist issues. We are talking about regulating interests at certain levels. Experiences in the sixties and seventies have been dismal failures. As an example, we have regulated our relations with Turkey as a friendly Islamic country and these relations have now reached the best possible level. On the economic level alone, the volume of trade is now close to \$100 million a year.

Last year we bought from Saudi Arabia 50,000 tons of wheat and are now seeking to buy between 100,000 and 150,000 tons. Instead of buying American or Canadian wheat, we prefer to purchase from Saudi Arabia, the fraternal Arab country to which we are bound by common and crucial interests.

[AL-HAWADITH] Some are disturbed by partisan and media radicalism and one-upsmanship at the expense of national security. Is Sudan experiencing such matters and how can regulations be firmed up?

[Ahmad] We are not disturbed by any partisan arrangements because, ultimately, we let the people decide in general elections. The Sudanese people are known for their intelligence, acumen and political awareness and place their confidence in programs and leaders that realize their political and Sudanese interests and keep

Sudan safe. This is what everyone ought to know about the Sudanese individual. I am confident that parties will be held to strict account in the next elections. True, we now have 30 parties, but the next elections will not permit such partisan overcrowding, and only those that have championed people's causes with courage will prevail. Up until a few days ago, I was responsible for the Ministry of Information and Culture. I found out then that 193 permits have been recently issued to partisan magazines and newspapers. Can the Sudanese reader absorb these huge numbers of newspapers? At any rate, it is a sign of health, awareness and a desire to give freedom to other opinions so that, ultimately, well-considered rather than aimless, self-serving or dogmatic points of view will prevail!

[AL-HAWADITH] It is said that there is a plan for change in the Presidential Council. How true is that?

[Ahmad] Debate is still going on about this matter. We are still holding a dialogue with our brothers in the Democratic Unionist Party and building bridges of goodwill and cooperation with them. We hope that they will make up their minds.

[AL-HAWADITH] Have you concluded the rescheduling of debts and discussions with the IMF?

[Ahmad] The IMF is an agency that has its own policies. We have had differences of opinion with it, the disagreement has not yet been cleared up, and no worthwhile results have been achieved.

[AL-HAWADITH] What does the IMF want?

[Ahmad] It has a standing point of view, namely to weaken local currency to give more weight to the dollar. It also imposes measures aimed at cutting the national labor force and to lower wages and benefits. The government has taken the opposite course. We have raised the 80-100-pound minimum wage to 300 pounds. The other thing is to reduce the size of the civil service and, of course, the government is better equipped to determine the proper size. In return, the IMF offers only technical advice which we do not need.

[AL-HAWADITH] Have the debts been rescheduled within the framework of the Paris Club?

[Ahmad] Some creditor countries have rescheduled the debts we owe them, some have cancelled them, and others have divided them into two parts, cancelling one and rescheduling the other. Negotiations are still in progress.

Companies Obtain 'Positive Results' in Natural Gas Exploration

45000147 London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
1 May 89 p 34

[Text] The area of northern and western Sudan, which extends from Dunqulah, the capital of Northern Province, to Wadi Hawr in western Sudan and to al-Fashir, the capital of Darfur, might be the area that will lighten the burdens of the economic crisis that Sudan is now going through. That is, if the results of explorations in this area by the British Robertson Company with the Sudanese Authority for Geological Research, the Sun Oil Company in the al-Jazirah area in central Sudan, and the Chevron Company in South Kordofan are correct.

Dr Bashir 'Umar, minister of petroleum and energy, asserted that prospecting for natural gas in the Red Sea Region and eastern Sudan is obtaining positive preliminary results that have caused a broad reaction among world drilling companies, and that Japanese companies have asked to prospect for precious minerals in eastern Sudan.

Interior Minister Views Security, Ties with Chad

PM2305140489 Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic
20 May 89 p 16

[Second and last part of interview with Sudanese Interior Minister Mubarak 'Abdallah al-Fadil by Muhammad Mahjub in Jeddah; date unspecified]

[Excerpts] ['UKAZ] Are the [Sudanese] Armed Forces [SAF] currently receiving military supplies?

[Al-Fadil] Of course, continuing efforts are being made to re-equip the SAF and enhance its combat capability, not only against the rebels, but also to defend the long border with eight states. We are now working to secure the necessary equipment and supplies for the SAF from fraternal and friendly states.

['UKAZ] How does the Sudanese Interior Ministry view the jihad call announced recently by the National Islamic Front [NIF], and will that lead to friction between the various forces?

[Al-Fadil] I believe the Front's announcement was a momentary angry outburst resulting from the announcement in parliament of the shelving of the Islamic criminal law, an alternative to the present Islamic laws. The conditions under which the NIF acted were caused by the political tension which dominated the country following the army's memorandum and the formation of the present government. So the NIF was forced to express its anger through the demonstrations which the country has witnessed, as well as at political seminars. We in the Interior Ministry dealt with that situation throughout the country wisely and considerably with the brothers of the NIF, and we asked them to cooperate with us in order to avert clashes with other sectors or

with the regular security forces. And, praise God, we were able to control the situation with NIF leaders' cooperation. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] The NIF has announced that it will not join the current peace process because the peace agreement negates the existence of Islamic shari'ah laws. What is your opinion?

[Al-Fadil] We must differentiate between peace and the peace agreement signed by the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement. The NIF opposes the peace agreement on the grounds that it contains a clause which has obstructed or shelved the Islamic laws. And to show you that this was unjustified, the view—and indeed the NIF's view—was that the criminal law should be endorsed and that the door should be opened to the other side when the constitutional conference is held. If any opposition or view is agreed on at the constitutional conference, it can be adopted by amending whatever can be amended at the conference.

The agreement which the DUP signed with the rebels stipulated that a decision must be postponed until the constitutional conference is held. So as you can see, there is no major difference: The NIF agreed that the rebel movement should come to express its opinion at the coming constitutional conference. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] From time to time the Sudanese press deals with the various tribal conflicts in western Sudan. Why has the Interior Ministry not resolved that matter?

[Al-Fadil] The press in Sudan is still considered new, especially since after the 17-year rule of former President Numayri and the Rajab [April] 1985 uprising, a large number of press graduates embarked on journalistic careers. Some newspapers have exploited these untrained and unqualified journalists for the sake of sensationalism merely to attract readers. [passage omitted]

Anyhow, as for the tribal conflicts, they are attributable to the dispute over water and pasture. Problems which have existed among the Sudanese tribes since olden times, just as happened recently to the Senegalese and Mauritanian communities when water and pasture disputes led to massacres. The only difference is that, in the past primitive weapons such as spears and sticks were used in the conflicts, but now tribesmen use firearms, so the problems now result in appreciable and serious losses. [passage omitted]

We are working to resolve the weapons problem and the smuggling of illegal arms to certain tribes. There is the people's defense idea in the areas near the southern provinces where large numbers of Arabs are to be found. The objective is for them to defend their honor and property against the rebel forces. The people's defense forces are a semi-regular force under the Armed Forces'

supervision. They fully perform their duties with regard to protecting citizens and territory. Besides, the people's defense law is under consideration and will be passed by the end of this month, God willing.

[UKAZ] Your excellency minister, what are the reasons for the present deterioration in security in Sudan?

[Al-Fadil] I would like to say that security in the national capital is very stable, as can be seen by ordinary citizens and visitors to the homeland. In the past, the security forces had shortages of the necessary equipment because the May [Revolution] neglected them. Huge efforts have been exerted to re-equip the police. We now have police patrol vehicles and armed police throughout the capital. At present, we are using a system whereby any vehicles moving in the city after 2300 hours are stopped and inspected as a precautionary measure against emergencies. This is being done because of the major influx of people to the capital, which accommodates more than a million refugees from the southern provinces because of the war. This, in addition to refugees from the neighboring states. Despite this, we are considered much better than our neighboring states. Refugees now represent 10 percent of the country's population. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] Your excellency minister, what is the true situation on the Sudanese-Chadian border?

[Al-Fadil] According to the information we have received, no coup has taken place in Chad. What has happened is a split, because power in Chad is based on an alliance among the tribes: Arab tribes called al-Qar'an and non-Arab Muslim tribes called al-Zaghawah, al-Badiyat, and al-Hijad [names of all tribes as published]. It was that alliance which brought President Hissein Habre to power. What happened—that is, within the framework of the internal conflict—is that Hissein Habre began to strengthen his position through his tribe by granting it sensitive state posts. Then he started ridding himself of people from the other tribes, thus prompting the other leaders to believe that Habre intended to arrest them. On the morning of 2 April 1989, these leaders—including Hassane Djamous, commander in chief and defense minister; Idriss Deby, defense and security adviser; the interior minister; and further officials started leaving Ndjamena. Interior Minister Ibrahim Itnu was arrested. The rest headed for Sudan and were then joined by groups from the Chadian Army. [passage omitted]

So undoubtedly the split that has occurred in Ndjamena places burdens on us in terms of security. Furthermore, the conflict in Chad has produced negative conditions in Darfur, with the supply of weapons to tribal rebels and the spread of armed looting creating instability in that region. As for political asylum, we are still thinking about granting the leaders asylum. The matter is under consideration and we are working to bring about a

settlement to the Chadian question and to return these people to their country in order to alleviate the major burden on our own country.

[UKAZ] Does this not affect relations between Sudan and Chad?

[Al-Fadil] Theoretically, it could, but in practice, it should not have any effect, because Sudan is not a party to the dispute that has occurred. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] We have heard that you are on your way to Addis Ababa. Can you tell us what the purpose of the visit is?

[Al-Fadil] The purpose of my visit to Addis Ababa is to convey a message from al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to Ethiopian President Mengistu. It centers on two main points: bilateral relations in completion of previous consultations and peace in the horn of Africa. This is in addition to the talks currently being held in Sudan between the Eritrean fighters and Ethiopia, which are expected to continue later, God willing. [passage omitted]

Interior Minister Interviewed

Comments on Saudi Ties, Military Situation
PM2205155089 Jeddah UKAZ in Arabic
17 May 89 p 14

[First part interview with Sudanese Interior Minister Mubarak 'Abdallah al-Fadil by Muhammad Mahjub in Jeddah; date unspecified]

[Excerpts] His Excellency Sudanese Interior Minister Mubarak 'Abdallah al-Fadil has emphasized that relations between the Kingdom and Sudan are historic, immortal, and special, and the ties that bind the Sudanese and Saudi peoples are fundamental and strong. He cited the mutual visits by the two countries' officials to conduct consultations and hold talks on common Arab issues and anxieties. He added that his current visit is the first to the kingdom as interior minister.

In an interview with him conducted by UKAZ in Jeddah, his excellency said that there is cooperation between the Kingdom and Sudan in combating drugs and in any fields affecting the two countries' security. His excellency cited the joint programs in training and cooperation in the information field and in all fields affecting the security of the Kingdom, Sudan, and the Red Sea in particular.

On the fields of cooperation between Sudan and the Kingdom, his excellency said: I am making this visit to revive links and boost integration and cooperation in the interests of both countries and both peoples. There is cooperation in the development field and the Saudi fund contribute to a number of projects in Sudan. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] Your excellency minister, there have been reports that the Garang forces have started strengthening their military positions after the cease-fire. Is this true and, if so, what is the Sudanese Government position?

[Al-Fadil] At the beginning of May, the rebel movement led by John Garang in South Sudan announced in a statement made over the movement's radio that it had ceased fire unilaterally and that it was committed to the arms agreement. [passage omitted]

But the movement carried out a number of attacks during the cease-fire.

[UKAZ] Over 16 towns and military positions are said to have fallen to the rebel forces. Do you believe that that number is exaggerated or do you agree with it, thus granting John Garang major negotiating power with the Sudanese Government?

[Al-Fadil] Yes, of course, that claim is exaggerated. This, because there are positions of no strategic importance. The Sudanese Armed Forces [SAF] withdrew from them of their own free will. The same applies to the areas near the border line with Ethiopia. We also did so in several positions in al-Nasir, since we decided that it would be militarily pointless to cling to those positions. This is why the SAF decided to evacuate those places, since they represent no strategic depth but only grant the rebel forces a media boost insofar as they besiege and attack such positions. [passage omitted]

[UKAZ] With regard to the areas captured by the rebels and the military supplies which they receive from Israel and the World Council of Churches, do you not believe that this itself puts pressure on the Sudanese Government and makes the recovery of those important towns difficult?

[Al-Fadil] Yes. If we look at the situation in the South, we will find that the southern region comprises three provinces: Upper Nile, Bahr al-Ghazal, and Equatoria Province. With regard to Bahr al-Ghazal [as published], we find that the SAF are in complete control of it, with support from the peace militias comprising the southern tribes opposed to the rebel movement. As for Bahr al-Ghazal, most of it is also under SAF control, except for limited areas from which they have withdrawn and are now working to recapture. As for Equatoria Province, we have noted that the rebel movement has noticeably focused on it over the past 2 years. It has thrown all its weight into that province and recently managed to capture some areas in the eastern part of it. As for the capital of the province, it is under SAF control. The success which the movement has achieved is in the area near to Kenya (east of the Equatoria Province), because some of the southern tribes are against the rebels. Furthermore, there are special conditions which enabled the rebel movement to acquire huge quantities of equipment from Israel and other states, especially last fall. Our

forces could not support their brothers in those areas because of transport difficulties, which helped the rebel movement to occupy the areas in question.

The SAF are ready to recapture these important parts of the homeland once the necessary resources are available. [passage omitted]

Khartoum Correspondent Views Abrogated Pact, Peace Initiative

45040307B Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 9 Apr 89 p 18

[Article by Usamah Ayyub under "Khartoum Letter" rubric: "Peace in the South, Opportunity for Easing of Sudanese Crisis"]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] A real opportunity for achieving peace in the South has perhaps never at any time been as well prepared as now.

This is because the current Sudanese government, which has approved the [peace] agreement, represents almost the entire Sudanese people. It includes all parties, political forces, and trade unions, with the exception of the National Islamic Front [NIF].

Even the Sudanese army stands behind this agreement and behind the government itself. [passage omitted]

As Dr Husayn Abu-Salih, Sudanese minister of information, said to me, with the national united front government's approval of the peace agreement and its rapid effort to achieve peace in the South, the Sudan has proven to the world its sincere intentions to achieve peace. John Garang's movement no longer has any justification for not entering the peace process. If the movement turns to maneuvering or delay, we shall then announce to the world that the fighting and war in the South are being imposed upon the Sudanese people.

The minister of information explained to me that the Sudanese delegation that went to meet Garang in Addis Ababa carried with it three letters. The first was the government's actual approval of the peace agreement. The second was from the prime minister. The third was a letter from the foreign minister and the chairman of the ministerial peace committee. [passage omitted]

The NIF believes—this is what the leader of the opposition in the Constituent Assembly, 'Ali 'Uthman Taha, announced—that the assembly has already rejected the agreement once before. This occurred when the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] sought an amendment of Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's motion for the assembly to empower him to hold the constitutional conference in such a way that it would include the peace agreement that the party had signed with Garang. The assembly subsequently refused the amendment the Unionists had proposed.

Thus, approval of the agreement now must take place by reintroducing it into the assembly for discussion and approval.

However, the leader of the Constituent Assembly, Muhammad Yusuf Muhammad (NIF), explained to the leader of the opposition that the agreement had never been brought up in the assembly, nor had it been discussed, so that one might say that the assembly had rejected it. What had happened at that time—last December—was that the assembly rejected the DUP proposal to amend the prime minister's motion so as to include the agreement. This means that the assembly has not discussed the agreement; indeed, it has never even been brought up so that one might say it has been rejected or accepted.

Political sources here in Khartoum have assured me that the Constituent Assembly's approval of the government communique that included the peace agreement implicitly means assembly acceptance and approval of the agreement.

Indeed, the very formation of the current government was based on the peace agreement. There are, however, some people in Khartoum who think that clear and explicit Constituent Assembly approval in a special resolution concerning the agreement is a necessity in order to resolve any problem that Garang might use as a pretext for delaying the peace process.

One of the members of the ministerial committee that went to Addis Ababa stayed behind and remained in Khartoum, waiting for the Constituent Assembly to resolve the issue. He urged the assembly to pass a definitive resolution approving the agreement, so that it might assume its legal and constitutional form.

Another problem being discussed here in the Sudan is the joint defense agreement between Egypt and the Sudan. Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi has asked his advisors for a legal memorandum on legal ways to cancel the agreement.

Some here in Khartoum connect the cancellation of the [joint defense] agreement with the peace process in the South, based on the fact that the peace agreement specifies cancellation of military agreements that infringe on sovereignty.

However, many political sources here in Khartoum think that the joint defense agreement with Egypt was not what was intended in the peace agreement by "agreements that infringe upon sovereignty," since it is a joint defense agreement between two countries against any foreign attack on one of the countries.

These sources also think that by "treaties infringing upon sovereignty," Garang intends the agreement on military and security facilities presented to the United States and that Numayri signed with the American government.

Sudanese political and party circles state that if the joint defense agreement with Egypt is cancelled, it will then become necessary to cancel the agreement on military facilities offered to America, as well as the Libyan-Sudanese protocol on military cooperation.

Refugees in Uganda Being Registered
EA0506181189 Khartoum SUNA in English
0923 GMT 5 Jun 89

[Text] Some 60,000 Sudanese refugees in Uganda are being registered and relieved in a first step to repatriate those desiring to return home. Mr Peter Gath-Kuoth, secretary general of the South Sudan Political Association, told the daily independent AL-SIYASAH today that the Ugandan Government, the Sudanese Embassy in Kampala and UN organizations are actively engaged in the registration of the refugees.

Mr Kuoth was a member of the Sudan delegation that visited Uganda last week for three days. The delegation was headed by Council of State member Dr Pacifico Lado Lolik.

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF YEMEN**

**Deputy Prime Minister Cited on Economic
Cooperation Issues**
44040364 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
8 Apr 89 pp 1-2

[Interview with Salih Abu-Bakr Ibn-Husaynun by Qasi Salih al-Darwish; place and date unspecified; first eight paragraphs are AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT introduction]

[Text] Paris—The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Minerals of the [People's] Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY], Salih Abu-Bakr Ibn-Husaynun, stated that his country has granted French and American companies concessions to drill for oil in exchange for the equal division of oil production for a period of 10 years.

The PDRY official, in an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, stated that the decision to grant concessions to western companies, in addition to the Soviet Union, is attributed to the fact that Moscow is drilling in exchange for a loan, which the PDRY will be obliged to repay in the future.

The Yemeni deputy prime minister disclosed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that his recent visit to France was crowned by the initial signing of an agreement on French

help to renovate the Aden refinery at a cost of \$30 million, and an agreement on the implementation of a \$35-million, 70,000-line modern telephone network.

He stated that an initial protocol was signed on the two projects pending their approval by the two governments.

The Yemeni minister stated that French financing will be in the form of easy loans, whose details have yet to be discussed. He remarked that his visit to France is occurring within the scope of the strong momentum witnessed by French-PDRY bilateral relations during the past three years, and in response to an invitation extended by the French minister of industry.

He added that the PDRY government granted the Elf Aquitaine company the rights to drill for oil in the governorates of Aden and Abyan, and in the areas of Sirr and al-Hadhar in northern Shabwah.

It also granted the Total Company the rights to drill in an important area east of Shabwah.

Regarding the drilling stipulations binding on the two French companies, he stated: The equal division of oil production for a 10-year period. As to whether these same conditions applied to the Soviet Union, he stated: "Not at all—the conditions regarding the Soviet Union are different. They are working in exchange for a price which we will pay them subsequently; however, the oil from Soviet operations will be ours alone."

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT asked the Yemeni official the following questions:

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Were other concessions granted to others in addition to the French companies and the Soviet Union?

[Ibn-Husaynun] To the Canadian Oxy Petroleum Company.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Are there not American companies?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Everyone knows that Oxy Petroleum is a branch of a large American company. There are still areas open to all companies. We have received requests from several companies, including American and other western companies, to obtain oil-drilling concessions in several of these areas.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Why do you wish to diversify when the stipulations governing drilling by the Soviet Union are better?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Because the area is large, and we cannot afford to take out many, large loans, which we would be obliged to repay if oil is not found.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is the current volume of oil production?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Eight hundred tons per day are transported in trucks. However, at the end of 1989 and the start of 1990, we will begin to operate a pipeline from Shabwah to Talhaf on the coast of the Red Sea. The Soviet Union built this pipeline, which will initially transport 30,000 b/d. The amount will be increased to 120,000 tons per day in 1991.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is the size of the oil reserve?

[Ibn-Husaynun] The reserve in the area of Shabwah constitutes a 500-million-ton geological reserve.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Will you be able to join the OPEC organization with this amount? Do you intend to do that?

[Ibn-Husaynun] This topic has not been discussed. However, it may be possible once we begin to export.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is there cooperation with Arab oil experts for the purpose of exploiting Yemeni oil?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Of course, there are experts, there is cooperation with Kuwait and Iraq, and there are Yemeni students in the Arab oil institutes. We also signed an agreement with the Iraqi ministry of oil to send experts to provide consultations in the oil field.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What about oil coordination with the Yemen Arab Republic?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Coordination exists at the level of information exchange in different areas, as well as in the area of refinement. Discussions are currently underway regarding the refinement of Ma'rib oil in the Aden refinery, as decided in the framework of the last meeting of the joint ministerial council headed by the prime ministers of the two halves.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Most of the states which became involved in the socialist experiment—from the Soviet Union to Algeria—are carrying out reviews and economic reforms, and are starting to focus on the private sector. What about the PDRY?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Every country has its special features. We have provided an opportunity for the development of a mixed sector and a private sector alongside the public sector. In the recent period, decisions in this regard were actually made, and emphasis was placed on exploiting national capital. Many of our citizens from abroad visited, and are currently visiting the country to study, explore and hold contacts with the ministry of industry in order to familiarize themselves with investment projects. This will doubtlessly have a positive affect on the economy.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Have special laws pertaining to duties, taxes, etc., been issued to facilitate investments?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Yes, we have introduced new amendments to the Investment Law, primarily regarding the right to invest, and then, regarding tax and duties facilities.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is private investment possible if it is limited to several fields?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Not at all—investment opportunities are available in all sectors, including the industrial, agricultural, commercial, building and even services sectors.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Hotels for instance?

[Ibn-Husaynun] Not with regard to hotels. They are the purview of the public sector. The hotels, especially the large hotels, are run by the tourism administration, which is subordinate to the ministry of information.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Does the opening of the door to private investment include Arab capital?

[Ibn-Husaynun] We have enormous funds, if we exploit them, it would be sufficient.

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