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CONTENTS

23 September 1992

ISLAMIC AFFAIRS

- PLO Accuses Bennour of Links to Busaysu Killing [London AL-HAWADITH 4 Sep] 1

NEAR EAST

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

- GCC Head Discusses Iraq, Iran [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 24 Jul] 2
- Syria, Egypt Agree on Economic Cooperation [Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH 4 Jul] 7
- Textile Industry Facing Expansion Obstacles [Paris LE MONDE 28 Jul] 9
- Indonesian Paper Interviews Ali Kafi [Algiers Radio] 11
- Algeria's Brahimi State Position on Iraq, Libya [Cairo MENA] 11
- Daily on Possibility of Algerian-Moroccan Summit [MAP] 11

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

- Abu-Sharif: 'Real Negotiations' Among U.S., Others [London AL-HAWADITH 4 Sep] 11
- PLO Delegate on Partition Plan, Right of Return [Nazareth AL-SINNARAH 17, 24 Jul] 13
- PLO Reportedly Seeking New Headquarters Site [YEDI'OT AHARONOT 4 Sep] 19
- Hamas Statement on National Honor Charter [London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 22 Aug] 19

IRAQ

- Saddam Compared to Shi'ite Imam Husayn [AL-THAWRAH 10 Jul] 20
- Economic Issues Discussed in Meeting With Saddam [AL-THAWRAH 4 Aug] 20

JORDAN

- Oil Imports in 1991 Rise to 747 Million Dinars [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 12 Aug] 22
- Article Reviews Situation After New Parties Law [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 24 Aug] 22
- Article Reports Leftist Parties Losing Ground [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 27 Aug] 24
- Government Bans NIDA' AL-WATAN Issue [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 14 Sep] 24

LEBANON

- Curriculum Vitae of Ambassador Hasan al-'Abdallah [AL-SAFIR 6 Jul] 25

MOROCCO

- Specifications, Cost of Power Plant [LA VIE ECONOMIQUE 28 Aug] 25
- ONE: Financial Burdens; Nuclear Energy Planned [LA VIE ECONOMIQUE 28 Aug] 27
- Figures in Sugar Production, Consumption Reported [LA VIE ECONOMIQUE 14 Aug] 28

SUDAN

- International Organizations Seen Siding With Garang [London AL-HAYAH 23 Aug] 28
- No Army Draft for Overseas Students [London AL-HAYAH 19 Aug] 29
- Industrial Bank Director Interviewed [London AL-HAYAH 21 Aug] 29

SOUTH ASIA

SRI LANKA

- Paper Views Suggestion of Raising Muslim Unit Against LTTE [DAILY NEWS 30 Jul] 31

PLO Accuses Bennour of Links to Busaysu Killing

92AE0643B London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
4 Sep 92 p 13

[Unattributed article]

[Text] The Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] has accused Ahmed Bennour, Tunisian Security Chief under former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, of having supplied "extremely crucial information" about active Palestinians to the intelligence service of a foreign country, which in turn supplied it to Israeli intelligence, the Mossad. This led to the liquidation of several of these Palestinians and the arrest of numerous other Palestinians in the occupied territories.

A number of Tunisian newspapers quoted an unidentified Palestinian security source as saying that the PLO has certain information about the involvement of Ahmed Bennour, now in Paris, in the assassination of

Palestinian security official 'Atif Busaysu, which occurred in the French capital some months ago.

The Palestinian security source mentioned that the friendship between 'Atif Busaysu and Ahmed Bennour due to their business together as officials in two Arab security agencies made it possible for the former Tunisian security chief to know of the Palestinian security official's presence in Paris.

The source said that the security agency of the Palestinian revolution learned the fact that 'Atif Busaysu had telephoned Ahmed Bennour from the German city of Bonn and informed him of his arrival date in Paris.

On another front, an informed Tunisian source said that Bennour was wanted in his country on charges related to embezzling public funds, informing to foreign parties, and establishing relations with some notorious Italian Mafia families during his stay heading up his country's embassy in Rome.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

GCC Head Discusses Iraq, Iran

92AE0549A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
24 Jul 92 p 8

[Interview with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah by Huda al-Husayni—place and date not given]

[Text] The Arab Gulf region remains to be the focus of concern throughout the world, in that the developments it witnessed following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait are still interacting and assuming multifaceted forms and the consequences of the invasion have not yet ended. The internal situation in Iraq is threatening to explode at any moment since Saddam Husayn is interpreting UN resolutions according to his interests; sometimes he complies with them and other times he turns his back to them. Meanwhile, the Arab Gulf states have agreed on clear principles, most prominent of which is their security, sovereignty, and their peoples' safety.

A few days ago GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah toured the major European capitals on a briefing mission. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT had an interview with him this week, in which he spoke about Gulf countries' priorities, which are, first, security and, second, economy. He explained the Gulf countries' new relations with the Arab countries and the world. He said common interests must be maintained and their base be broadened. He said the Gulf region cannot be stable if Iran-Gulf relations are not based on mutual respect and on shunning the export of ideologies and revolutions. He spoke at length about the existing full coordination between the GCC countries and the readiness of each of them to strengthen its own national army. He stressed that the GCC door has been shut both for entry and exit. [as published] He denied that the Gulf countries are financing a plan to topple Saddam Husayn, but said that the kind of the existing regime in Iraq is no longer acceptable in these times. He spoke about the Damascus Declaration, saying it is a new base that is expected to include other countries "because Damascus Declaration preserves the integrity and sovereignty of each state." He said the Gulf, Egypt, and Syria are implementing the Declaration's economic provisions concerning development. He stressed that Damascus Declaration provides that military-security cooperation is left to each country according to its desire; in other words, it is to be within a bilateral framework. The situation and the existing conditions, he stressed, are still tense, and the "Gulf rejects political buffoonery." He said every country that stood against Kuwait is free to do so, but has to bear the consequences. The following is text of the interview:

[Al-Husayni] Does the GCC have a clear view with regard to the coming developments in the Gulf?

[Bisharah] I will speak about the GCC views. First: relations within the GCC framework. The GCC march

must be strengthened, particularly from a security aspect, because the economic, commercial, and humanitarian aspects are already advanced. Most objectives that cannot be achieved now can be achieved later; however, the security aspect is one with which we cannot gamble or postpone. Therefore, Gulf security action, whether within the framework of building the Gulf armed forces or cooperation between ministries of interior, is essential after having entered a new era in the regional, Arab, and international relations. This is our new Gulf perspective on the basis of which we are trying to build the future relations between the GCC countries and the Arab and foreign countries.

[Al-Husayni] During the Gulf summit that was held in Kuwait, Sultan Qabus submitted a plan for building a Gulf army, which it was said has been referred for study. Now you are talking about a consensus of views regarding the common dangers and discussing security unity and security cooperation. But in the meantime some [Gulf] countries have concluded separate defense agreements with Europe and the United States. Where is this coordination here?

[Bisharah] With regard to the first part of the question concerning building a unified Gulf army according to the views of the security committee headed by Sultan Qabus, the project is now under consideration. The countries concerned will invite committees specialized in this matter to discuss its fate, whether it is feasible to implement, how much would it cost, and what its relationship would be to the national armed forces of each country. The committees will deal with all these matters in order to submit a report to the next summit.

With regard to the GCC's bilateral cooperation relations with the world countries, the important thing is that the Gulf countries are aware of the need to provide a security mechanism and security tools within the bilateral framework. In other words, the Gulf states believe that there should be a deterrent to create security and stability. Such deterrent would be built by the Gulf countries and should be based on regional understanding and through creating reassurance in Arab relations. Ensuring commitment to covenants in Arab relations is necessary. Also, the deterrent can be built through Gulf foreign relations.

As for regional understanding, which forms the second part of the future perspective, Iran-Gulf relations should be based on understanding; that is, the parties should understand that security must be established in the Gulf and the Gulf passageways and that there should be cooperation in protecting the natural environment of the Gulf and its fish. Revolutionary language with rhetoric that only generates instability and disturbances must stop.

The biggest problem that we face in the region, whether with Iraq in the past or with Iran at present, is the

exploitation of ideologies in order to expand and dominate. We demand that relations between countries should be natural and normal.

[Al-Husayni] Ideologies are a cover-up for internal ambitions. Do you have any guarantees that Iran has no designs on the Gulf?

[Bisharah] No. We are sure that through understanding and cooperation relations will be based on good neighborliness, mutual interests, geographic proximity, and closeness. We demand that Iran should stop using the media for the propagation of material that stir disturbances and revolutionary rhetoric that produces nothing. This is our right; it is also Iran's right to expect from us normal relations, relations that would be free from extremist racism that has been characterizing Arab-Iranian relations. Chauvinist and racist trends should cease.

[Al-Husayni] Did you ask Iran why is it arming itself?

[Bisharah] The Iranians have their own views on their security and stability.

[Al-Husayni] Who is threatening their security and stability?

[Bisharah] They have been hurt by the Iraqi regime. I believe that the Iraqi regime has hurt the neighboring countries, the Arabs, and Iran. But this is another question.

[Al-Husayni] As a party having relations with Iran you are committed to respecting international rules and principles. You have no designs to expand into Iran, for example, yet you cannot stop Iran [from expanding].

[Bisharah] No, no. I would engage in dialogue in order to prevent Iran from harboring any domination designs or inclinations that would stir disturbances in the area. The area would flourish with coexistence and good neighborliness. What is needed is coexistence based on mutual interests, legitimate interests, and trade development. This is our view.

Our area has been harmed by futile ideological drivel. We have been troubled. The Iraqi regime has disturbed us with its nonsense. The Iranian revolutionary philosophies that were projected at the beginning of the Iranian revolution also troubled us. We now believe that the regime in Iran realizes that mutual interests call for a resort to dialogue. Such steps will be in everybody's interest. Logic and neighborliness dictate maintaining Gulf-Iranian relations. They are also dictated by shared waters and shared stability. There can be no stability in the area without coming to understanding with Iran, and there can be no stability in the Iranian side without coming to understanding with the Gulf countries. This is another aspect of Gulf perception of the future. With regard to inter-Arab relations, Kuwait, which you knew before the invasion, and of which I am a son, staked its future and the preservation of its security on ethics and the word of honor. What has happened? Because it

believed in these principles, it did not develop the means of protecting itself; it relied on good will. Kuwait was part of "Plato's Republic" in its humanitarian disposition and good will. But suddenly the Kuwaitis woke up to find themselves in a disaster. Their country has been stolen, their honor trampled upon, and their will broken. They have been wiped out of existence as a country and a people and their past and future have been erased. What is unfortunate is that not only the Iraqi regime betrayed the word of honor but also eight other Arab countries failed to uphold Arab legitimacy. The Kuwaitis have felt that there is a fundamental defect in Arab relations, and the reason for that was the failure to abide by the word of honor or by the Arab League Charter, the Charter that was laid down by Arab politicians and statesmen on the basis that it encompasses independent countries. What happened to our sovereignty? An Arab army entered our country, occupied us, and caused havoc. No, we no longer accept to go back to that disturbing era of Arab relations. Inter-Arab relations must be based on facts.

First: We are a sovereign country with established boundaries. Everybody should accept that the boundaries exist, that they are binding, and that they should be respected and documented.

Second: There should be commitment to Arab legitimacy; the Arab League supports this, but some Arab countries reneged.

Third: Inter-Arab relations should be based on mutual interests and broadening these interests so that the Arab world will be linked to the whole world and be in harmony with the new world order. To say that we are an isolated island or to talk about an Arab solution to this or an Arab treatment of that is unacceptable because everything is linked to Arab security and the Gulf security is linked to regional and international interests.

[Al-Husayni] But the Damascus Declaration has not been implemented.

[Bisharah] The Egyptian-Syrian-Gulf relations are based on political coordination and consultation, as the Declaration says. They are also based on economic development, with concentration on the development aspect.

[Al-Husayni] You have omitted the military aspect.

[Bisharah] The military aspect in the Damascus Declaration provides that security matters are to be handled within bilateral arrangements between any of the eight Gulf states and Egypt or Syria, or between two Gulf states on one side and Egypt or Syria on the other. Military cooperation would fall with bilateral arrangements, not within a collective contract. But the important thing the Damascus Declaration provides is the building of future Arab relations on established facts and internationally recognized borders.

[Al-Husayni] Did Syria approve this provision?

[Bisharah] Yes, yes.

[Al-Husayni] With regard the Gulf countries only?

[Bisharah] No, but within the general declaration. This is the basis. The Damascus Declaration is not only for the eight [member] states. It is the new formula for inter-Arab relations. The Damascus Declaration will be the basis for inter-Arab dealings. As for the previous idea of the big Arab entity that can be created by force, we do not approve of it.

What's important is the third part [of the declaration] that deals with the Gulf foreign relations. These will be based on interests, understanding, and strategy. The world has strategic interests in the Gulf. Kuwait has also strategic interests in the world order. This is the future role of the Gulf countries after the disaster that befell us. The basic thing in the relations is understanding and harmony with the new world order.

[Al-Husayni] It is said that you support partitioning of Iraq. Is that true?

[Bisharah] This is not true. On the contrary, the thought of partitioning Iraq is a prescription for disorder, problems, instability, and a regional disaster. We reject this thing because we do not accept disaster or calamity in the region. This would mean Balkanization of the Gulf and involvement in a whirlpool of wars, conspiracies, and clashes.

[Al-Husayni] Turkey proposed entering northern Iraq under the pretext of protecting Iraq's Kurds. Some people saw in this proposal an attempt to annex Iraq's Kurdistan to Turkey. Will the Gulf countries accept this?

[Bisharah] No, we do not accept this proposal because we do not approve the partitioning of Iraq. But we must realize that the time when a regime is allowed to annihilate a quarter of its people under the pretext of dealing with a domestic problem has gone. We must realize that the world cannot accept, neither does logic, that minorities be annihilated because of alleged conspiracies. Conspiracy stories are found inside dark dungeons; they do not exist. They should be eliminated from dealings in our region.

[Al-Husayni] You said the time of annihilating people is gone. Now, according to the United States, there will be a collective will for the new world based on democracy and respect for human rights. Will the GCC be part of this collective will?

[Bisharah] The GCC is a very effective institution of the new world order with respect to the Gulf's strategic, economic, and political situation. The GCC countries have a clean record with regard to human rights within, of course, the traditional Gulf concept. We do not have gas that we use against our people, nor did we build torture dungeons, or decapitate people, or deprive them of their source of livelihood. We are quite confident in this regard because we respect this principle and respect the international trend toward respecting the human

mind and human ingenuity. The time of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes has gone.

[Al-Husayni] You mentioned that there is coordination between the GCC states.

[Bisharah] yes.

[Husayni] Is it on all levels?

[Bisharah] The GCC, of course, means changing the shape of the area in all aspects of life, the most important of which are the human, political, intellectual, and strategic aspects. This means creating one expansive Gulf confederation in the future. We hope that in the year 2000 we will realize the objectives stated in the basic political system, which is a Gulf formula within the system of one expansive unified state similar to a confederacy. Therefore, coordination is underway in all aspects.

[Al-Husayni] Of course, this includes establishing relations with the other countries.

[Bisharah] Yes.

[Al-Husayni] It has been noticed that when the situation between Qatar and Bahrain once again became tense, Qatar strengthened its relations with Iran. Does this come under Gulf coordination?

[Bisharah] No, no. Gulf-Iran, Qatar-Iran, or Bahrain-Iran relations proceed according to the principles laid by the [GCC] summit, namely to improve relations with Iran. I personally believe that the more we engage in dialogue with Iran the closer we get to achieving these principles and objectives.

[Al-Husayni] But Qatar signed a water agreement with Iran.

[Bisharah] Water is a question of life and not security. The agreement does not pose an in-depth danger in Qatar-Iran relations. We want to convince all the Iranian forces that mutual interests dictate our coming to an understanding on Gulf-Iran affairs. We want Iraq to be part of this organization in the future, the organization of regional understanding.

[Al-Husayni] Do you not think that this common interest will be very costly for you, more so than it would be for Iran? It will cost you more.

[Bisharah] No, we want a regional understanding; neighborly understanding that is the key to security and stability.

[Al-Husayni] It is said that Iran has been the cause for impeding the implementation of the military-security aspect of the Damascus Declaration.

[Bisharah] This is not true. As I said, the Damascus Declaration matters are proceeding well, particularly in the economic and political fields. As for security matters,

these are left for the bilateral framework. The Damascus Declaration states will meet on 9 September in Doha.

[Al-Husayni] Certain European countries are contacting the United States with the aim of relaxing their boycott of Iraq preparatory to resuming relations with it. What will your stand be in this case?

[Bisharah] This cannot happen. The situation is still very tense. There is no European country that does not realize that the Iraqi regime should comply with the Security Council resolutions. Iraq's new tricks and its defiant rhetoric are unacceptable. There is international (European, Gulf, and American) resolve that Iraq should fully comply with the Security Council resolution, particularly the resolution governing the cease-fire. Iraq should not benefit from the cease-fire and renege on its conditions.

[Al-Husayni] Certain European countries believe that they did not get their economic share in Kuwait and want, at least, to obtain their economic share from Iraq.

[Bisharah] All the world and all the countries stood in support of international legitimacy and not economic interests. If there are any commercial benefits to be reaped, it is the right of these countries to reap them. But the world came to Kuwait's defense because the Iraqi regime is an outlaw in the human community. It is a regime that is unacceptable on this planet. This and many other similar regimes are unacceptable.

[Al-Husayni] You insist on talking about the Arab countries that supported Iraq and stood against Arab legitimacy, against Kuwaiti legitimacy in particular. You cannot condemn a regime and a people by the same standard.

[Bisharah] Sister, we saw on television those people dancing in joy over our tragedy, others singing over our martyrs' blood, and yet others laughing in ridicule over our plight. Your saying that there is a difference between ruling regimes and people is wrong. What we saw in Jordan was enough; mass demonstrations marched against us in the Jordanian and Yemeni streets.

[Al-Husayni] I was in Kuwait and Kuwaitis told me that not all the Palestinians who were in Kuwait were against it.

[Bisharah] This is true. I am not saying that they were against the Kuwaitis. But what I say is that the PLO's leadership was against us. 'Arafat was daily saying that he cannot but stand with his own people. He used to insist on saying this. In any case, we have learned the lesson and it is now up to us to preserve our security in a manner that is certain.

[Al-Husayni] Will you never reconcile with the countries that stood with Iraq?

[Bisharah] We are in a civilized era, the era of intertwined interests. But there are the fundamental points which I have just mentioned to you regarding commitment to covenants of an Arab regime within its present

boundaries; commitment to the Arab League Charter that provides for respecting the boundaries, sovereignty, and independence of every state. If any of these countries is exposed to threat or occupation, all the Arab peoples should stand with it and fight with it. What is required from us is to fight against whomever tampers with this Arab regime. This should be clear to everybody. Talk of an Arab entity or Arab [nationalist] rhetoric and the use of force are all unacceptable. We are always aware that such talk is "against" us and not "for" us; it is not in our interest.

[Al-Husayni] Some people believe that the Damascus Declaration was a reward for Egypt and Syria.

[Bisharah] No. It is an expression of the Syrian-Egyptian-Gulf position that holds to the sovereignty and independence of those Arab countries that have many things in common. Without this there will never be reassurance and, consequently, inter-Arab relations will bear no fruits. Indeed, they would remain superficial relations.

[Al-Husayni] Why is Iraq at this time in particular harping on the idea that Kuwait is part of it? At the same time, Barzan Tikriti has written an article calling for unity between Iraq and Kuwait. Why is this timing?

[Bisharah] Because the Iraqi regime decided to invade Kuwait and was defeated. It wants future Iraqi policy to be dedicated entirely to achieving this objective—by reiterating allegations that Kuwait is part of Iraq and that it was separated from it by an imperialist conspiracy and later by a NATO war. As Iraq wants to pass on this policy to future generations. As for the drivel contained in Barzan's article it is a serious thing. He is drawing a new map for the Gulf region that has nothing to do with Iraq.

[Al-Husayni] Doesn't Iraq have anything to do with the Gulf region?

[Bisharah] Nothing to do, of course. It is true that Iraq is in our area, but in his article Barzan Tikriti cancels Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE people while sitting on Lake Geneva shores. This is an insult to our mind. But this reflects what the Iraqi regime has in store for us. The Iraqi regime thinks only of achieving its objectives, even if through the use of repressive police methods and violence.

Of course, we in the Gulf are facing a challenge. We shall resist this regime. We shall resist it on the regional, Arab, and international levels. We are aware that the Iraqi regime is trying to whet financial, political, and territorial appetites in the Gulf. We shall resist it.

[Al-Husayni] Do you think that the Western world will once again to defend the Gulf and Kuwait in particular should they be exposed to danger?

[Bisharah] Of course, of course it will come back. We in the Gulf must make sure that the world will return [to defend Kuwait] on the basis of mutual strategic interests.

We must preserve international interests in the Gulf and act with responsibility. Kuwait is not just some remote rocks in the Atlantic or part of the tundra. Kuwait is a strategic country linked to a Gulf system, a regional system, and an international system. The Iraqi regime was so foolish as to imagine that this system is easy to break.

[Al-Husayni] Do you believe that Iraq will try again?

[Bisharah] I believe it will try again with different methods, and the Gulf people must resist it. It should be borne in mind that Iraq is now fighting for the last chapter of its intellectual and political life.

[Al-Husayni] Is it true that you are funding a plan to overthrow Saddam Husayn?

[Bisharah] No, we do not fund such plans. I personally do not believe in such a thing and I am not enthused about it. I believe that if a regime cannot be toppled from within, nothing will topple it from without. It is true that there are certain regimes that should be gotten rid of by an international will, but personally I do not see that this is acceptable. The Iraqi people must express their will.

[Al-Husayni] Barzan Tikriti also stressed the need for Iraq to join the GCC.

[Bisharah] The GCC is for the six member states that share their tradition, their present, and their future on intellectual, behavioral, and social basis.

[Al-Husayni] Did you close the door?

[Bisharah] Yes, we have closed the door both for entry and exit. The GCC encompasses these countries that are alike. The Iraqi system does not agree with the Gulf individual. We in the Gulf have our own characteristics and we would like to maintain them.

[Al-Husayni] After the UN inspectors were banned from entering the ministry of agriculture and irrigation in Iraq, Washington warned Baghdad that it could be violating the cease-fire resolution and, therefore, this could lead to dealing another military strike to Iraq. Do you believe that dealing another military strike will succeed?

[Bisharah] The Iraqi regime is defying the United Nations over the question of inspection; it is also defying the United Nations in the border demarcation committee; it is also defying the United Nations over the question of peacekeepers in the north; it is defying the six cease-fire terms. As I have already said, Iraq cannot enjoy the cease-fire without implementing its six terms. Therefore, Iraq should comply; if it does not, sanctions will be applied against it.

[Al-Husayni] But many countries are not enthusiastic about a new military strike.

[Bisharah] Yes, but in the end Iraq will comply whether it likes it or not.

[Al-Husayni] What is the situation with regard to border demarcation after Iraq withdrew its team from the special UN committee.

[Bisharah] The committee will carry on with its work and will make recommendations which the Security Council will endorse with a resolution. The Iraqi-Kuwaiti will be delineated and documented and subject to the UN option.

[Al-Husayni] Would you explain the term "UN option"?

[Bisharah] It means the Security Council has drawn up the borders and the Security Council will maintain them.

[Al-Husayni] Using forces?

[Bisharah] Forces and arrangements. The Security Council will maintain stability on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders. This is an international obligation.

[Al-Husayni] Is it true what the German press agency said about an Iraqi opposition conference is to be held in the Gulf before the end of the summer in order to establish an Iraqi government in exile, and that this government will be headed by three administrators: Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, a Shi'ite; Adib al-Jadir, a Sunni who resides in Cairo; and a Kurd, who will either be Mas'ud Barzani or Jalal Talabani?

[Bisharah] By God I know nothing about this. But all I can say is that the Iraqi opposition should be effective and united. It should pursue a clear policy and interact with the new world order. We do not want obscurantism and exclusivity because their time has gone by.

[Al-Husayni] Obscurantism, exclusivity, and interaction with the world you are talking about—do you not think that your insistence on being Gulf people and that you are one bloc is some kind of obscurantism and exclusivity?

ce flagrant racism nor hardline ideology. We do not operate in the dark in order to topple regimes. We do not resort to terror. Altogether we are of a good character and would like to expand the base of regional and Arab interaction found on interests. We do not pursue obscurantism. Rather, we have our own characteristics.

[Al-Husayni] Expansion on the basis of interests and not of brotherhood?

[Bisharah] That's right—of brotherhood. We are linked to a common heritage. But these links can be strengthened by common interests. As for abolishing characteristics, it is something that we reject.

[Al-Husayni] On the occasion of 14 July [revolution anniversary] The Sultanate of Oman sent a congratulations telegram to Saddam Husayn. Is Oman playing a special role?

[Bisharah] No. This is up to the policies of each country. The GCC states too are independent states.

[Al-Husayni] Reuters reported last week that a Saudi-Palestinian meeting took place. It quoted PLO sources in Tunis as saying that they are holding reconciliation talks with the Gulf states, with the exception of Kuwait. It said if these talks succeed, 'Arafat will visit the area for the first time in two years. How true is this report.

[Bisharah] I have no information in this regard. Also, we are not in a play where people fall in and out of love. We are countries and interests. It is not as if the first act is the beginning of falling in love and the second is reconciliation [as published], and the third act is embracing and making it up, and the fourth act is the finale. These are like scenes from Anwar Wajdi [renowned Egyptian actor] movies. We are states, interests, and facts. Everyone who adopts a position is free to do so, but he has to bear the consequences of his decision.

[Al-Husayni] Even if the [presumably the Palestinians] apologize?

[Bisharah] There is no apology. Are we in a kindergarten? There are commitments to be met. We refuse the saying that the clock has stopped for seven months then resumed ticking. What kind of simplistic thinking is this?

Now peace should be made [musalamah] with the Iraqi regime. But how can this be done? I don't know. The climate now calls for mature peace-making, and not for forgiveness where clear principles are violated. We realize that there is no bravado in politics, nor are there plays and clowns. These are facts.

[Al-Husayni] Are you thinking of switching your dealings with the PLO to the peace negotiations delegation that consists of Palestinians from inside the country?

[Bisharah] It is not in anybody's interest to divide [the Palestinians] into inside and outside. I have met the delegation in Madrid, and have found them to be responsible people who deserve to be trusted. They do not engage in nonsense talk nor do they dance on stages.

Syria, Egypt Agree on Economic Cooperation

92AF1088A Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
4 Jul 92 p 3

[Article by Fu'ad al-Shathli]

[Text] Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, Egyptian prime minister, and Engineer Mahmoud al-Zughbi, Syrian prime minister, signed yesterday the minutes of the final meetings of the Egyptian-Syrian Supreme Joint Committee. The two sides stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination in foreign policy on all levels and also coordination between the two countries in Arab and international economic meetings in order to serve mutual interests. It was also agreed to establish markets in both countries for domestic products and also to establish a channel for continuous communication between customs authorities in order to complete the transactions

and to deal with the difficulties that impede commercial exchange between the two countries. The minutes of the meeting included actions to find the appropriate formulas to expand commercial contracts through well-balanced deals and also to speed up the preparation of the unified form for tax collection and also to continue cooperation between the two countries in the fields of customs and tax laws. In the field of industry, it was agreed to work to expand cooperation in order to reach a stage of integration with a view of increasing and expanding the level of commercial exchange between the two countries. It was agreed to hold a joint meeting within the two coming months for the officials for standardization and measurements in both countries. The agreement included coordination between the ministries of industry in the two countries to study the possibility of exploiting the mines of phosphate and exploiting marble and decorative stones and natural tar and to exchange experts and experiences in these fields.

In the field of agriculture, the committee recommended continuing cooperation in the field of plant maintenance, reforestation, veterinary medicine, plague eradication, seeds, use of lasers and computers, documentation, and research on wheat and fruit-bearing trees. The Syrian side requested to be informed of the Egyptian experience in distributing reclaimed agricultural land to college graduates to study the possibility of using such a method. In the field of planning, the committee stressed the importance of supporting and developing cooperation and the continuous exchange of information regarding training programs in the specialized institutes of both countries. In the field of electricity, the committee concluded the final report of the economic and technical feasibility study for an electrical link between the electrical networks of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. The committee agreed upon holding a meeting in Damascus during the month of October to be attended by the ministers of electricity and energy in the concerned countries and also to be attended by the director general of the Arab Fund and the chairman of the Islamic Bank for Development in order to discuss the results of this study and its recommendations and to approve the procedures for implementing the electrical link and methods of financing it.

It was also agreed to continue cooperation and coordination relating to the local manufacturing of electrical equipment and fixtures and to make use of the industrial capabilities available in Egypt in the field of manufacturing metal towers, transformers and meters, repairing electronic circuits and manufacturing spare parts and parts for thermal generation stations to secure the needs of the electricity sector in Syria. It was also decided that the Egyptian side would send authorized representatives from the Egyptian companies submitting technical and financial tenders to discuss the offers to supply automatic transformers and circuit breakers. It was also agreed that a group of Syrian specialists would visit Egypt to study the achievements realized in the field of local manufacturing of steam generation stations and

their spare parts, as well as the associated research laboratory, with a view to planning future cooperation in this respect. It was also agreed to exchange studies, information, and experience in the field of new and renewable energies in order to better define and evaluate these energy sources, together with the technical and practical training needed to exploit them. It was further agreed to establish and develop centers where this could be done. In the field of oil, the committee noted with satisfaction the steps taken to support cooperation between the two countries in this field and also the signing of the minutes of the meeting of the Egyptian technical committee for oil and mineral wealth last February. The committee also reviewed the progress achieved by the two sides regarding the draft protocol for technical cooperation for exchanging know-how and experience between the Egyptian Ministry for Petroleum and Mineral Resources and its Syrian counterpart. It hopes to finalize the protocol and sign it as soon as possible.

In the field of reconstruction, housing and infrastructure, the committee stressed the importance of completing the implementation of the decisions of its previous meetings. It was also decided to continue the exchange of visits and meetings between the concerned authorities in both countries to specify their needs in the field of training and management for the water authority and the sanitary draining authority and to agree upon a plan of action in this respect. Also, they agreed to specify their needs for chlorine cylinders and water meters and to ascertain possibilities for their local manufacture in both countries with a view to achieving integration between them. It was also agreed to establish a joint contracting company and to study the possibility of treating the contracting companies of one country as a national company in the other country. It was also agreed to speed up the formation of an Egyptian-Syrian working group to study the implementation of the drinking water and sanitary draining projects in Syria and the possibility of using the locally available material, equipment, and pipes for these projects. The working group would also prepare for comprehensive and integrated urban planning in order to design procedures for dealing with present and future cities in both countries.

In the field of transportation and communication, the committee expressed its satisfaction with what has been achieved so far, in particular, with progress in developing travel between the two countries. In the field of maritime transportation, it was decided to hold a meeting of experts from both sides this month in Cairo to prepare the requisit studies to establish a joint company for maritime transportation, also to hold another meeting for the joint maritime committee during this month to study matters related to developing and facilitating the maritime movement between the two countries. It was also decided that a Syrian technical delegation would visit the Egyptian shipyards that submitted tenders to build a 2000 horsepower tugboat in order to set the technical specifications and to agree upon prices

and methods of payment. It was also decided to hold a meeting in Damascus next August for the specialists in the fields of planned transportation to set the necessary foundation to prepare a technical and economic study for the establishment for a joint company for cargo and passenger transportation. As for communication, the committee stressed the importance of increasing the telephone lines of the two countries and speeding up the procedures for activating the maritime cable between Alexandria and Beirut after it was repaired and to coordinate with the concerned authorities in Lebanon to achieve this goal.

In the field of mass media, the committee stressed the importance of completing implementation of its previous recommendations and decisions and to regularly exchange radio and television messages on a bi-weekly basis for the time being, provided that later on it will be on a weekly basis within the framework of agreements concerning the use of air mail or media offices to deliver the documentary programs that need to be transmitted quickly via satellite. In the field of tourism, the committee expressed its satisfaction with the increased volume of tourist exchanges between natives of both countries, noting that it was doubled between 1990-1991, and also with the success of the Syrian tourism week which was held in Cairo at the beginning of this year. The committee recommended inviting the Egyptian side to hold its tourism week in Damascus this fall. In the field of health and medicine, the committee expressed its satisfaction with the current cooperation and called upon the concerned authorities to continue working to implement the decisions of the previous sessions. It was decided to hold a meeting next December for the authorities from both countries concerned with specifying which Syrian [medical] commodities are of an equal value to those imported from Egypt in order to establish a framework for balanced trade. It was also decided to continue cooperation in training health service employees, to continue the exchange of knowledge and information, and to coordinate and cooperate in the field of emergency medicine and the combatting of epidemic and regional diseases. Finally, they agreed upon an expanded program for immunization and coordination between the two countries.

In the field of pharmaceuticals, the committee stressed the importance of unifying drug registration methods within a period of six months after which there will be reciprocity of registration through the exchange of visits and meetings. The committee stressed continuing the exchange of Egyptian drugs and medical supplies for certain Syrian commodities to be agreed upon in advance and also cooperating in the establishment of a joint industry for medical raw material.

In the field of social security, the committee took note of the draft social security agreement submitted by both countries, satisfied with the joint formula that has been agreed upon and which shall be submitted to the concerned authorities for signing during the next session. In the field of business, a joint council was formed and

commissioned to establish a plan for the future practice of commercial and investment activities in both countries, also for increasing awareness of the products of both countries, and for increasing and diversifying the volume of commercial exchanges, along with efforts to establish joint investment projects economically profitable to both countries using shared capital from Egypt and Syria. It was decided that the committee would hold its next session in Cairo next January.

Textile Industry Facing Expansion Obstacles

92AF1134A Paris LE MONDE in French
28 Jul 92 p 27

[Article by Pierre-Angel Gay: "Textiles: The Maghreb's Resource"; first paragraph is LE MONDE introduction]

[Text] Nothing predisposed Morocco and Tunisia to become "major players" in the ready-to-wear clothing industry. Last year, however, the Kingdom of Morocco became the premier supplier of clothing to France. It is an impressive but fragile success.

Rabat (From our special correspondent)—We are on the Rue des Consuls, below the kasbah of Les Oudaia. The vendor turns toward the tourist passing by and offers him polo shirts and T-shirts signed Lacoste or Hugo Boss. They are undoubtedly counterfeit, and are sold for a handful of francs.... This scene is repeated at every stop, from Tangier to Marrakesh, from Fez to Zagora. It is domestic and commonplace. It would be unfair and incorrect, however, to retain—of this Morocco that is making such great strides—only this image of counterfeit goods and petty trade. In only a few years, the kingdom has established itself among the "major players" of the ready-to-wear clothing industry.

"Ahead of Italy! Would you believe it!" Incredulous, the French professional does indeed find it hard to believe. "The Moroccan garment industry rose in 1991 to the front rank of France's suppliers," he added. The statistics are there to confirm this development. With last year's exports to France totaling 3.4 billion francs, the Kingdom is far out in front of Italy (2.6 billion francs), for Italy—whose expertise and strong position had appeared to make it invulnerable—is now also being pressed hard by Tunisia (2.56 billion francs). This upheaval in the hierarchy is no accident, to judge by the figures for the first few months of the year; it has already made the southern shore of the Mediterranean a major partner in the French clothing industry.

Manna From Abroad

There are 1,500 textile and clothing firms, with a total of 180,000 employees, 150,000 of which are in the clothing industry alone.¹ Dozens of factories are springing up in the unfinished suburbs of Meknes and Casablanca.... Nothing seems able to stop the irresistible progress of a Morocco that already has a population of 27 million. The abrupt decline in investments (down 17 percent in 1991) following the Gulf war is now a distant memory.

The manna from abroad is returning, stimulated by the unpublicized abandonment of the law concerning "Moroccanization," which since 1974 had obliged foreign firms to transfer 50 percent of their capital stock and the post of CDG [president-CEO]. The government avoided a debate in Parliament and rescinded the decree of implementation.

"At the present growth rate," Mohammed Lahlou, president of the Moroccan Association of Textile Industries (AMIT), says with satisfaction, "we will have a work force of 400,000 by the year 2003 or 2004." That would be more than are employed today in the French textile sector, which is shrinking at the rate of 15,000 employees per year and will never again exceed 350,000.

Tunisia is doing equally well. With approximately 1,700 companies and 95,000 employees in the "structured" sector alone—and even more in the artisanal sector—Tunisia has succeeded in attracting foreign firms by adopting, in 1972, a law favoring investments in the export industries. German capital rushed in, followed by French and then by Italian capital.

The results are there, with annual exports of the textile sector accounting for 35.8 percent of Tunisia's total exports; a steadily increasing trade balance (offsetting imports by 113.4 percent in 1987 and 120 percent in 1991); and specialization (in slacks and denim garments) that had become essential. "Tunisia has more export companies than Morocco, and our markets are more diversified," Sassi Bahri, secretary general of the National Textile Federation (Fenatex), says with satisfaction.

Uncertainties

From the corporate headquarters in Casablanca to the elegant restaurants in Carthage, however, one hears the same lament, namely that Morocco and Tunisia do not belong—at least not yet—to the exclusive club of the "dragons" of the textile and clothing industry. To be sure, the disturbances in neighboring Algeria could, over the long term, tarnish the image of the Maghreb. There is also the upsurge of Muslim fundamentalism in Tunisia, which has for the moment been contained: "The uncertainties that for so long hung over the post-Bourguiba era have now been dispelled," government officials and manufacturers alike are insisting.

Inequalities

Last, there are the possible consequences of the obvious social inequalities that exist in Morocco—consequences that are feared by some foreign entrepreneurs and the mere mention of which annoys the spokesmen in Rabat and Casablanca. "We need a middle class, not just fundamentalists," is the angry comment of Hassan Abou Ayyoub, King Hassan II's minister of external trade. "To accomplish that objective, however, one must first pass through certain historical phases and initiate a process of industrialization. We need to create our own Schneiders and Peugeotts," he said.

These are challenges to which certain specific challenges that relate to the textile and clothing industry have just been added: namely, the challenge posed by the trend toward specialization in the ready-made clothing field—that segment of Maghreb industry that is the poorest in terms of technology and capital; the challenge posed by the gradual opening of national borders—a sacrifice that Morocco and Tunisia have decided to make; the challenge posed by the lack of diversified markets, inasmuch as EEC absorbs the bulk of the exports of the two countries (approximately 80 percent in the case of Tunisia); and above all, the challenge posed by the shortage of skilled workers and especially by the lack of experienced managers.

"Technicians? I'd hire them on the spot," Abdel Hamid Sabbagh, founder of the Fantasia company, explained at the Seventh International Textile and Clothing Exhibition. "In just a few years we have gone from an abundance of manpower to a scarcity of manpower," chimes in Chedly Chtourou, the technical director of Lee Cooper, whose factory in Bizerte is nonetheless one of the jewels of the textile industry in Tunisia.

But it is the external shocks that promise to be the most dangerous. The establishment of the great single market in 1993—together with the new competition from Eastern Europe whereby investments are being rerouted toward Poland, Hungary, and even Romania—is particularly reinforced by the anticipated dismantling of the multifiber accord (AMF). Because it would reintegrate the textile and clothing industry into GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and eliminate all quotas, dismantling the accord would in practice terminate Morocco's and Tunisia's privileged access to the EEC market.

Cost Per Hour

"Tunisia is expensive," says one alarmed industrialist who claims he cannot produce a T-shirt for less than 11 francs whereas a recent buyer had offered him 4.7 francs. With a trade unionism that is "reasonable" but well-integrated historically into its society, and with a social policy that provides public assistance but is accompanied by very low productivity, Tunisia can no longer claim to be among those countries that have very low labor costs. A recent study published in the *COURRIER DE L'INDUSTRIE*² figured the average hourly cost of labor at \$2.82 as of the summer of 1990—a cost that placed Tunisia ahead of Portugal but also ahead of Mexico, Brazil, and Turkey.

According to the same criteria, however, Morocco is still far down the list, with an average hourly cost of \$1.28 (compared to \$0.85 per hour 10 years previously)—a comparative "advantage" that is steadily diminishing. "In a period of a few months," says the Moroccan Association of Textile Industries (AMIT), "the minimum wage was raised three times—by 10, 15, and 10 percent, respectively—substantially more than the rate of inflation." Faced with the competition from Sri

Lanka, Indonesia, China, and even Egypt, the Maghreb (should it complain?) needs henceforth to offer something other than cheap manpower.

Morocco and Tunisia are reacting, each in its own fashion: precisely and methodically in the case of Tunisia, which is making plans for employment and diversification both downstream and upstream. Tunisia hopes to develop its cotton production and decrease its imports of supplies, as explained by Ahmed Sellami, president of the National Textile Federation. "Last year," he said, "we imported 165 million meters of fabric to make clothing for reexport. Our objective is to be producing, five years from now, 57 million of these 165 million meters—35 percent of the total, representing an increase of 6 percent per year." The plan is counting on the creation of 8,000 jobs per year.

Upgrading

On the other hand, in a Morocco that is traditionally the more capitalist country, there is no plan. "You do not create jobs by decree," the minister of external trade says. "In France itself, plans for the textile industry have not always yielded the expected results." But his colleague Abdellah Azmani, minister of commerce and industry, is on the same wavelength as the entrepreneurs when he speaks of diversification and increased productivity. "To meet the competition," he says, "we will certainly have to attract the maximum of investment capital, but we will also have to upgrade our labor force, as the countries of Southeast Asia have been able to do; practice economies of scale; assert ourselves in the area of finished products; create international trading companies; and lastly, develop our own stylism salons."

Stylism: it is a slovenly word...or perhaps it bespeaks ambition. Moroccans and Tunisians do not want—and are unable—any longer to be content with orders from the principal French and European purchasing centers. Some of these centers, says one manufacturer, have their eyes riveted on prices and are capable "of urging you to invest in new machinery so that they can more readily drop you later on in favor of a cheaper supplier."

The clothing manufacturers of the Maghreb should—like their European counterparts—develop quality, a policy on trademarks, and a "just-in-time" inventory policy. And they should exercise control—to the extent possible—of their relations with their customers. In short, they should seek out markets that—according to one executive—"place more importance on delivery dates than on price." It is a formidable task for firms that often belong to the category of PME [small and medium-sized businesses].

From Tunis to Casablanca, there is an urgent call for establishing a genuine partnership between French and Maghreb firms whereby the former would contribute expertise and a distribution network and the latter would contribute prices that are still low enough for the French manufacturers to retain their market share. "The French should invest massively in Morocco, if they want to

compete with the Far East," declared the CEO of Gromatex, Abdallah Hasnaoui-Amri. "We are a suburb of Paris and of Rome," Moncef Marcous, president and CEO of Moderne Confection [Modern Clothing] of Tunis, agrees. "We are a suburb of Paris and Rome," he says, fully aware that of all his options, this is his best bet.

Footnotes

1. Of these 1,500 firms, 25 percent are partly, and 10 percent wholly, foreign owned.
2. No. 58, May 1991

Indonesian Paper Interviews Ali Kafi

LD0409102192 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic
0800 GMT 4 Sep 92

[Text] In an interview with the Indonesian newspaper MEDIA INDONESIA, Higher State Council Chairman Ali Kafi has commented on the new world order and the effects of the end of the cold war on international relations and the demands of the developing countries.

He said that it is essential for the major political, cultural, and geographical blocs to be fairly represented on the UN Security Council. He added that the 10th summit conference of the Nonaligned Movement should attach great importance to the question of the restructuring and the boosting of the world organization.

He stated that there should be a balance in the powers of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly and that the Security Council should be enlarged.

Algeria's Brahimi State Position on Iraq, Libya

NC3008183592 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1645 GMT 30 Aug 92

[Excerpts] Jakarta, 30 Aug (MENA)—Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi has praised Algerian-Egyptian relations, describing them as very excellent.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, Brahimi praised Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's recent visit to Algeria, saying it was extremely beneficial. [passage omitted]

Brahimi discussed Algeria's stand on recent developments in Iraq, saying that Algeria strongly supports Iraqi unity and is very worried about what is happening in the area. He added: "We regard any type of threat to Iraqi unity as a threat to all the countries of the region."

The Algerian foreign minister added: "If Iraqi unity is harmed, the unity of the neighboring countries will undoubtedly be affected as well. Therefore, we are very worried about what is happening there. We hope that the situation will go back to normal and be closer to legitimacy."

The Algerian official also commented on the Libyan-Western crisis, saying that his country regrets the resolutions passed by the UN Security Council against Libya. He noted that Algeria and Egypt are members of the Arab League's seven-member committee that is tasked with following up developments in this crisis. He added that this issue will undoubtedly be raised at the Arab League Council meeting in Cairo in September. [passage omitted]

Daily on Possibility of Algerian-Moroccan Summit

LD2608153192 Rabat MAP in English
1345 GMT 26 Aug 92

[Text] Rabat, Aug. 26 (MAP)—A summit could possibly be held between King Hassan II of Morocco and President of the Algerian High State Committee 'Ali Kafi, says "AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI" daily in its Wednesday release.

The summit, to be held in Ifrane or on Moroccan-Algerian borders, will take place in the wake of latest developments of the Moroccan Sahara dossier, says the daily of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) quoting sources from Rabat.

The daily which recalls the visit paid lately to Algier by Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali and Interior and Information Minister Driss Basri underlines the incidence the summit will have on the Sahara issue and on Moroccan-Algerian relations.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Abu-Sharif: 'Real Negotiations' Among U.S., Others

92AE0643A London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
4 Sep 92 p 13

[PLO political adviser Bassam Abu-Sharif interviewed by Usamah 'Ajaj in Cairo, no date given]

[Text] The round of bilateral negotiations that began in Washington on Monday, August 24 is considered one of the most important and decisive rounds. It is—according to Arab sources that took part in the Damascus conference of the confrontation states—the first serious test of Israel's Labor Party government, and of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

Before the round began, AL-HAWADITH met with Bassam Abu-Sharif, political adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, and discussed with him the Palestinian position on America's consent to give Tel Aviv loan guarantees to the PLO's preparation for the Washington round of talks, the disagreement of some PLO elements—among them Abu-Sharif himself—over Rabin and Labor in power, the survival of George Bush's administration in power, and the manner of coordination among the Arab states.

This was the interview:

[‘Ajaj] It appears that the recent American-Israeli agreement has had negative effects on the overall state of the course of peace on one hand, and on the Palestinian position specifically. How do you assess this agreement, in Palestinian terms?

[Abu-Sharif] To begin with, I think that one should not exaggerate what happened with President Bush and Rabin. It seems that the American administration took a step in submitting to Congress, for debate, a plan to give the guarantees to Israel. But it contains many complexities. We asked Congress to take its time, as we rely on these detailed complexities, and know the current domestic situation in the United States. But aside from our awareness of these complexities, there must be one Arab position that insists upon the application of what the United States promised all sides. This is the promise President Bush made before Congress on 7 March 1991, when he declared that the peace process in the Middle East must be based on the implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338, giving complete political rights to the Palestinian people, and protection to Israel’s security. So, giving these guarantees, without the preliminaries essential to implement 242, and the equation of land for peace, will lead only to the prolongation of the peace process, which means opening the door in the Middle East to the forces of extremism, to exploit the public feelings of frustration resulting from the prolongation of the peace process.

[‘Ajaj] You spoke of preliminaries essential for the implementation of Resolution 242—what are these preliminaries?

[Abu-Sharif] These preliminaries are perfectly in keeping with the American principles. They are: a total halt to settlement construction on the land occupied in 1967, an immediate end to the activities of the Israeli killing squads and organized terrorist operations against the Palestinian people, in accordance with the Geneva accords, particularly as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is also Minister of Defense. It is not possible for the United States to maintain credibility as long as it accepts or remains silent about the “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” formula—that is, the formula of the Prime Minister and Defense Minister; recently he made the Israeli government commit to implement 242 and to a schedule for withdrawing its forces from the Arab and Palestinian territories.

[‘Ajaj] It seems that in spite of all that has happened, the Palestinians are still depending on the American administration and President Bush.

[Abu-Sharif] The Palestinians trust the seriousness of President Bush and former Secretary of State Baker, and hope, of course, that the American administration will keep this trust and credibility. We are still convinced, despite the analysis of some politicians, that the decision to give Israel the loan guarantees cost it its ability to give the Israeli government “advice.” We are convinced that

the opportunity is still open for serious and sincere action in this way, and the Labor Party’s being in power, objectively, gives the American administration this chance. The change has begun and will not stop, even though it may be slow at the beginning. The whole process will be like a snowball that starts out small and slow, then grows bigger and faster. Anyway, the Arabs know how to form a practical and realistic position to bring up at the negotiating table, which is in reality President Bush’s desk in the Oval Office in the White House.

[‘Ajaj] So the PLO has no concept or expectations of the changes in the American administration in light of the diminished chances of Bush’s election for a second term?

[Abu-Sharif] My personal belief is that things will change in Bush’s favor. Even so, I don’t think that changing the occupant of the White House will lead to a change in American policy and finding a political settlement in the Middle East, especially in light of the change of the Israeli government. The presence of Rabin, who wants to be a “peace hero,” having become known as a “war hero.” This will take time, because making peace is harder than making war.

[‘Ajaj] What are your thoughts on the lines of Palestinian action in the next phase?

[Abu-Sharif] The central point is what Bush promised the world before the Madrid conference, to transfer authority to the Palestinians by the end of this October, and the new opportunity we have makes this possible. The self-government proposed by the United States is a transitional phase linked to the final phase, which is the phase of Palestinian national independence. The discussion that will go on during the month of negotiations will be, by its nature, the announcement of the self-government, its validity and authority. So I see no danger to the Palestinians and their rights in expediting what President Bush promised. We are the ones who made the peace process possible. We will hang tough and insist on attaining our full rights. And we are positive that in the end we will get them.

[‘Ajaj] After the PLO’s consent for the Palestinian delegation to take part in the Washington round of negotiations, what constitutes preparation for this round—will it be decisive?

[Abu-Sharif] the delegation will present a working paper containing our concept of the transitional phase, our announcement of self-government and its authority, and our clear renewal of the link between this phase and the final phase. For example, our view, as regards its authority, is that we do not reject municipal elections. But these elections must take place with the general elections of the legislative council preparing an elected executive committee to take over the reins of power under the rubric of the transition of power to the Palestinians.

[Ajaj] What does the phrase "reins of power" mean in the Palestinian interpretation?

[Abu-Sharif] The phrase reins of power means one thing to us and something else to Rabin. We will not accept our taking over cleaning and guarding affairs. We want to take power, and this is naturally linked to a schedule for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, and the Palestinian ones, of course. Another example: the American administration's specifying the phrase "self-government" in place of the phrase "autonomy" proposed by the Israeli government, makes possible a clearer and more comprehensive announcement of the nature of the transfer of power to the Palestinians, which is much broader than what is contained in the word autonomy. This will be the backbone of the negotiations.

[Ajaj] But Washington and Tel Aviv have rejected the PLO's request to expand the Palestinian delegation, and the participation of PLO members in the negotiations.

[Abu-Sharif] It is delusory to think that the negotiations are what are going on between the Arab delegations and the Israeli delegation. The real negotiations are what go on between the United States and Russia on one side and the relevant parties on the other. As to what transpires in the negotiating chamber, it is merely an ongoing declaration that the peace process is in progress.

[Ajaj] Are Syria's fears of the postponement of the subject of the Golan, while the Palestinian issue is studied, ended?

[Abu-Sharif] We have proven clearly and will prove again that the Palestinian method in the negotiations regards coordination and consent between the PLO and the other Arab sides as basic. The PLO will not permit any attempt to split Arab ranks, or to isolate any one side at the expense of another. Coordination with Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon is permanent and ongoing.

[Ajaj] What is your concept of the Egyptian role in the current phase?

[Abu-Sharif] Egypt has a role far more important in this phase than in the past phase of the peace process. Egypt is now able to pursue the constant persuasion of Yitzhaq Rabin that a total halt to the building of settlements, and to the iron fist policy, is essential for the success of the peace process, along with the release of political prisoners, and the holding of general elections. Rabin needs Egypt, and so Egypt can convince Rabin, albeit gradually, that the peace process will be exposed to danger unless the Israeli government takes the measures I have spoken of. On another front, Egypt has a role in the context of the Arab negotiating delegations, and it is an important role, because of its past experience and its international relations, particularly with the United States. Egypt can always act to guarantee, to some extent, the United States' role as the "honest broker."

PLO Delegate on Partition Plan, Right of Return

92AE0568A Nazareth AL-SINNARAH in Arabic
17, 24 Jul 92

[Interview with Nabil al-Ramlawi in two installments by Imtiyaz Diyab in Geneva; date not given]

[17 Jul pp 12-13]

[Text] Since the start of the peace conference and slightly before—that is, since America began to implement its plan to impose its Middle East settlement through the peace conference, it has worked assiduously to oppose any Palestinian representation in international forums. Geneva was one scene of this crushing political diplomacy.

We see Palestine's ambassador, the Israeli ambassador, and the U.S. assistant secretary of state for international organizations in the halls of the United Nations avoiding a direct clash, meeting European and Arab ambassadors, each trying to pull these parties to his side.

In the corridors of the United Nations in recent weeks, it was possible to see Dr. Nabil al-Ramlawi, Palestine's ambassador in Geneva, smoking cigarettes and talking to ambassadors of various nationalities, recruiting his assistants for various tasks.

Behind this recent diplomatic intifadah was the Palestinian ambassador's initiative to call for the UN Commission on Human Rights to hold an extraordinary meeting aimed at stopping Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories.

This Palestinian initiative came as a practical and immediate response to the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip in late May and in compliance with calls for help from the occupied territories, directed at the international community, bearing in mind that the UN Commission on Human Rights is the primary and most important relevant international agency and has been authorized by the Security Council and the General Assembly to monitor Palestinian human rights for more than 32 years.

The Palestinian plan of action, established by the highest echelons, is based on a number of elements, most importantly the confirmation of international legitimacy through the Commission on Human Rights and its action and the necessity of dedicating any opportunity to activate the role of UN agencies to provide international protection to the Palestinian people under occupation, "especially at a time when America is trying to remove the Palestine question from the authority of the United Nations." The plan was also based on the close relations that bind Palestine to a large number of Arab countries and friendly countries in order to guarantee the required number of 35 members of the Commission on Human Rights. The initiative also relied on a past resolution of the Economic and Social Council that accorded this council the authority to meet on an extraordinary basis with the consent of a majority of its members.

Palestinian diplomacy acted at the global level, contacting capital cities through its mission in Geneva, with missions in countries and the Arab ambassadors to the United Nations. Palestinian diplomats also worked to encourage friendly member countries of the committee to forward their consent to holding the emergency session.

The initiative was accepted with a majority of 28 committee members, despite frank American opposition and near silence on the part of the Europeans. But American pressure was in earnest on both the Human Rights Center and the country missions, as well as on the capitals [themselves]. Opponents of the initiative resorted to legal and procedural trickery to defeat the Palestinians. On the evening of June 24, 1992, the Human Rights Center announced the refusal of a request for a claim that the number of consenting countries was 24, thus not meeting the required minimum, despite the consent of 28 countries, when 27 were needed.

After the suspension of this latest round of the American-Palestinian struggle in the United Nations, the disputing parties retreated behind a curtain of press releases and hidden diplomatic protests, but the Palestinian politician and diplomat was able to break through the siege imposed on his cause and his people.

"Battle of the Red Cross"

On of the historic struggles that went on in Geneva was the "battle of the Red Cross," as it was described by the ambassador of the State of Palestine.

In April, 1991, Ambassador Ramlawi asked the President of the Permanent Committee of the Societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent to invite Palestine to participate with full membership in the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross, on the strength of the completion of Palestine's accession to the Fourth Geneva Conventions in 1989 and its submission of legal accession documents to the Government of the Swiss Confederation. In accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, Switzerland had to circulate the Palestinian membership papers to all sides at that time, as a peaceable, honest, and neutral state, but Switzerland was under American pressure. An American deputy secretary of state came in July 1990 to Bern solely to tell the Swiss Government to refuse Palestine's link, as a state, to the Geneva conventions.

So the Swiss position, which did not record Palestine's joining, conforming to American pressure, admitted doubt in an "information paper" with the accreditation papers and circulated them to the countries, saying that the Swiss Government was not able to assert whether the State of Palestine existed or not. Therefore the matter was left to the countries. At the Nonaligned Summit Conference, held at that time in Belgrade, about 100 countries and 100 heads of state and government, welcomed the accession of the State of Palestine to the Geneva Conventions and considered that this accession

represented a step on the road to peace in the Middle East region. Switzerland officially obtained a copy of this decision from the Yugoslav Government. The United States rejected Palestine's official attendance at the conference because there was a delegation representing Palestinians at home in the negotiating process. When it was decided to start the negotiations in Madrid in October 1991 there were, in that same month, high-level negotiating meetings in progress on refugee affairs. Palestine participated effectively in this round of high-level negotiating, as in any previous year. At the close of this round of negotiating, during the last session, the conference was to read the final report on the round's achievements. When the conference read the report and the names of the countries that had participated, among them, Palestine with observer status, the American delegate requested the right to speak and said that he opposed the appearance of the name of Palestine on the roster of participants. He said that if it was left on, the United States would not take part in adopting the report. This was the first American attempt at the level of international forums to reject the continued representation of Palestine by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Ramlawi had this to say about it: "The president insisted that the procedure was sound, and that Palestine had actually participated. Neither the reporter nor the conference could deny the presence of Palestine, which had actually participated, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution requesting the PLO to participate in UN conferences and agencies. When the American delegate maintained silence, the issue of Palestine's name among the participants passed. That was the first attempt." The next attempt was in November at the Red Cross conference.

Conference Postponed

Ramlawi went on: "What happened at the conference between us and the Americans over our participation in the Red Cross conference was by way of Mr. Fit [Vijt?], who is in charge of International Organizations for the Dutch Foreign Ministry. He talked with us and went to the hotel to meet with Bolton, the American delegate—Secretary of State Baker's assistant for UN affairs—who had come to Geneva. We held several meetings with Mr. Fit, whose sole aim was that we should not take part in any way at all. He used to tell me that he was speaking on behalf of the 12 European countries plus the United States. He told me that 'Mr. Bolton was in the hotel, waiting for the outcome of our meetings, for me to inform him of it, so that he could then inform Baker directly.' He asked us to say that we did not want to participate in the conference.

"Among the alternatives proposed by Mr. Fit (in agreement with Bolton), was, the first alternative he brought up: for the people who had come to Madrid to represent Palestine at the Red Cross conference. We told him that Madrid was one thing and the Red Cross was something different, that Madrid was negotiations and we who

made up the delegation. It was the PLO that had formed the delegation, and Baker knew it. What went on in Madrid was a negotiating process, and not an international conference and a Red Cross conference. An international conference has nothing to do with what is going on in Madrid. He said that what was going on in Madrid was an international conference. I told him that what was going on in Madrid was not an international conference but a meeting between Israel on one side and some Arab countries on the other. It was a bilateral meeting, not an international conference. An international conference has bases that were not used in the Madrid meeting. It has a mechanism not used in the Madrid meetings. It has objectives that do not apply to what is going on in Madrid. Of course, Fit rejected this. In any case, they attempted to bring in our friends who had gone to Madrid so that they could be the representatives at the Red Cross conference, instead of the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. When we rejected their proposals, they said, 'We agree to send an invitation to Palestinian persons from inside [the territories], who will not sit under the Palestine nameplate.' That means no Palestinian nameplate. Individuals—specific individuals would be invited, on an individual basis, to participate, coming with observer status and no place card in front of them on the platform. In other words, spectators. We rejected this. Of course, the issue grew as the conference approached, and the permanent committee sent Mr. Sommaruga, president of the International Red Cross; Dr. Ahmad Abu-Qurah, president of the Permanent Committee of the League of the Red Crescent and Red Cross; and the two legal advisers from the league and the international committee. They came to Tunis to meet with Brother Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] to persuade him that Palestine should not participate, so that the conference would not fail. Brother Abu 'Ammar insisted on Palestine's right and suggested alternatives. He said, 'We do not want full membership. We want an invitation sent to Palestine to take part with observer status. If you do not want Palestine to be a member, send the invitation to the PLO to take part as an observer. The in-house system of the Red Cross permits organizations to be invited to participate as observers in these conferences.'

"They refused to give us a promise to send the invitation. Then we insisted on taking part and suggested to them that this question be posed to the conference for a vote—whether Palestine should participate or not participate. They went back to Budapest in their private plane, and it seemed very clear that the permanent committee that set up the meeting with President Yasir 'Arafat felt the strong likelihood of Palestine's success in participating if the question should be put to a vote in the conference. The decision was made to postpone the conference until 1993. Political observers considered the postponement of the conference because of Palestine's nonparticipation to be a political victory for Palestine."

The Goal: End the Palestine Question

The third attempt was in the UN General Assembly and came at the same time as all that went on with the Red Cross conference. Discussion of the subject of Palestine began on 29 November. At the same time that Ramlawi was negotiating with the Red Cross over this, the General Assembly was discussing the subject of Palestine. The Palestine delegation to the United Nations in New York advanced plans for resolutions on Israeli practices and on the Palestine question overall. The United States and the European countries, led by Britain, came and tried to persuade the Palestinian delegation in New York to withdraw the plans for the resolutions on Palestine because the subject of Palestine was being discussed in the negotiations that had begun in Madrid and these negotiations might yield a solution to the problem—no General Assembly resolution was going to solve the problem.

I asked Mr. Ramlawi about what this meant, and he replied, "If we had acknowledged their wish and withdrawn the resolutions, that would mean there is no need for a Palestine question paragraph on the General Assembly agenda, and the clause would be struck from the agenda. Once the paragraph is struck from the agenda, there is no need for a Palestinian delegation in the General Assembly. At that point, it would be easy to say that the General Assembly's resolution on the participation of Palestine or the PLO in the General Assembly's work and in conferences held under UN supervision is unjustifiable—and thus could be easily canceled, as the resolution on Zionism as a form of racism was repealed. That would lead to the PLO or Palestine's exclusion from international UN forums and from all other international forums, just as would have occurred in the General Assembly. Thus they would have achieved their objective: to have struck down the PLO and Palestine as the Palestinian people's representative. In that event, the representatives of the Palestinian people would be those who went to Madrid, meaning the blockade of the Palestinian people by those inside only and the partition of the Palestinian people into those inside and those outside [the territories], with the emphasis on the inside for a certain side in the negotiations and the political solution, without those outside. This would weaken our people inside, placing them in a situation where they could not resist any solution imposed on them through the cruelty or ugly practices of Israel or the United States. This way, the national question of Palestine would be finished, step by step, in conformity with the interests of Israel and the United States, which seeks to impose the solution that suits it, under the slogan of securing stability in the region."

Europe Cooperates With America

There have been other attempts to eliminate Palestine from international forums, as happened with the Committee on Human Rights in its last regular session in early 1992. Every year it adopts resolutions that benefit the Palestinian people, condemn Israeli practices, and

affirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their state.

The United States and some other European countries [as published] adopted a negative stance on these resolutions, on the pretext that these resolutions hindered the course of peace that started in Madrid and that such resolutions are worthless, because what happens in Madrid will solve the problem—therefore they are worthless—there is no need for these resolutions. So they voted no on these resolutions.

There was also an attempt to merge the self-determination paragraph with the practices and erase it from the place where it had priority on the committee's agenda.

Also, on the subject of UNCTAD VIII (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) Conference, a few months ago, there was an attempt to transfer the subject of the General Assembly's assistance to the Palestinian people, which occurred for the first time at the UNCTAD conference after more than 10 years of dealing with this subject. UNCTAD VII studied the subject and adopted resolutions in spite of opposition. Mr. Ramlawi commented, "Now the United States has mastery over the world and has succeeded in turning over the subject of assistance to the Palestinian people to the General Assembly, instead of it being studied at UNCTAD VIII, as happened at UNCTAD VII and in the past. This, too, is an attempt, on top of the other American attempts."

Ambassador Ramlawi added, "Everyone knows that it is in no one's interest for the negotiations that started in Madrid to stop. So they go on with their plans to divide the Palestinian people and diminish the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people in international forums. But they know that they have not succeeded in any basic attempt so far. They have not succeeded in the General Assembly; they have not succeeded in the Committee on Human Rights; they have not succeeded in the International Committee of the Red Cross; they have not succeeded in the High Commission for Refugees; they have not even succeeded at the Conference on Trade and Development. Last month, the American delegate asked the meeting of the Conference on Trade and Development to strike out the paragraph from the agenda, the paragraph on assistance to the Palestinian people. Of course, we opposed it, and there were long negotiations there with the countries, and with UNCTAD. So we adopted a hard-line position—I do not want to go into details. Anyway, they did not succeed in striking out the paragraph. It remained. While some countries may have agreed on clarifying the paragraph, the assistance to the Palestinian people and the secretary General's decision on aid to the Palestinian people remained as a paragraph to be studied next fall."

[24 Jul pp 14,22]

[Text]

Neither at Home Nor Abroad

[Diyab] What is the Arabs' role, in light of these attempts?

[Ramlawi] In Geneva, the Arabs always supported the Palestinian position and the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people.

[Diyab] How will the PLO continue in this ongoing struggle with the biggest country in the world?

[Ramlawi] There are two basic points in this regard. First, the unity of the Palestinian people inside and abroad—it is the basis for our rights to stay alive in the mind of the world. The second point is our adherence to the United Nations, in terms of the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter, and the UN's resolutions relating to the Palestine question. International legitimacy is not just certain Security Council or General Assembly resolutions, but all of the UN's resolutions, including No. 194, on the return of refugees; and No. 81, which deals with the establishment of the Palestinian state; subsequent resolutions in the General Assembly and other international UN forums; the principles of international law; and the provisions of the Charter. This is the international legitimacy that has affirmed and defended the rights of the Palestinian people and still reaffirms them today. This is what the United States and Israel are trying to avoid in the current negotiations that began in Madrid, very unfortunately. We must hold fast to the negotiations and other international forums, based on the United Nations, as relates to the Palestine question and the rights of the Palestinian people, in addition to strongly safeguarding the unity of the Palestinian people inside [the territories] and abroad and its closeness to its leadership, represented by the PLO. There is no place for any other action to resist the negotiations that are now going on, which are aimed at liquidating the Palestine question.

[Diyab] Do the officials in the delegations know what is happening?

[Ramlawi] The delegations know. The extent of their knowledge of the details may not be uniform, but in terms of the dangers facing the Palestine question in international forums, I think all our delegations know that, even if there is some discrepancy in awareness on this point between one delegation and another. Of course, this requires the total awareness of our negotiating brothers. I am sure that they enjoy this awareness, and thus all of their discussions are grounded in the bases and principles that I spoke of a moment ago, in an effort to maintain the unity of the Palestinian people. There is no inside and outside. The Palestinian people are one people, and the Palestinian negotiators insist on the reality of the rights of the Palestinian people, affirmed by the United Nations.

Because of the Gulf War

[Diyab] We know that Shultz failed when he came to the occupied territories, but Baker succeeded. We know that Baker works with his State Department assistant, Bolton. Bolton works with the outside, and Baker works with the inside. How do you view Baker's sending Bolton to Geneva while he himself goes with the delegations? Doesn't that diminish the importance of the PLO?

[Ramlawi] It is very clear that the American objective in the negotiations was and still is, as I said, to liquidate the Palestine question. They know that the PLO represents the Palestinian people, that it is not a pretense, but has the total support of the Palestinian people inside and abroad. Therefore when Mr. Shultz tried and went to Jerusalem and asked to meet with Palestinian figures there, bypassing the PLO, they issued instructions to all figures in the occupied territories to boycott Mr. Shultz and not to go to the meeting with him. And that is what actually happened. Shultz waited in the hotel, and no one showed up, so he went back to Washington after a failed trip. When Baker and the new American administration took over the effort to achieve a solution to the matter, they took Reagan's experience, and Mr. Shultz's experience, into consideration. They knew that it was possible to get to our people [in the territories] only with the consent of the PLO. That is why they started negotiations, sometimes direct and sometimes indirect, with the PLO, to facilitate the job of the U.S. administration. We, of course, and I tell you this frankly, have made the United States' job easier, so instructions were given to cooperate with Baker, for reasons everyone knows: global conditions after the Gulf war and changes in international reality. All of these factors, actually, led to our helping facilitate the negotiating process begun by the United States. Contact between Baker and Palestinian figures began in the territories with the consent of the PLO. The United States knew that if we had not wanted this process to begin, it would not have begun. That is why they pressured us. There is no need to go back to the past, but the sum of circumstances led us to facilitate the negotiating process that the United States wanted. But the new American administration, led by Bush and Baker, had set out their plans, which we know very well: to use the PLO to obtain the consent of the inside to start negotiations. Then, later on, some other kind of Palestinian representation before public opinion and the international community as an alternative to the PLO. Then, when the American administration reaches that stage, they will be able to take steps to isolate the PLO and confirm and establish the other Palestinian representation.

When Will the Palestinian-American Dialogue Resume?

[Diyab] What should we infer from what you say about the likelihood of the resumption of the PLO-U.S. dialogue as long as the negotiations proceed satisfactorily?

[Ramlawi] There are always alternatives in political action. There are alternatives. The various parties to

political dialogue always propose the maximum. The two sides propose the following maximums. America's maximum in the negotiations is that the PLO should be finished—that the Palestinian issue should be embodied by the [Palestinians] inside [the territories], thus weakening the Palestine question, weakening the Palestinian people's resistance to facilitate, in the end, the imposition of the solution America wants, in line with Israel's interests. We proceed on the basis of our own maximum: our total rights, the unity of the Palestinian people, the total rights of the Palestinian people to return, to establish a state, independence, and self-determination. So far, the negotiations have not got beyond this sphere.

When the negotiations get to the next stage, America will ascertain that the Palestinian people cannot be divided. This is what the Palestinian people affirm every day. The Palestinian people cannot be divided, and there can be no going back on this. America will be forced to look for alternatives that can be pushed forward in the negotiating process, and one of these alternatives may be the reopening of the direct dialogue with the PLO, ending the attempts to do away with the PLO and the attempts to divide the Palestinian people. This will lead to the strengthening of the Palestinian position in the negotiations.

[Diyab] What is the role of the Arabs in the 1948 area [i.e. Israel proper]?

[Ramlawi] The Palestinians in the 1948 region—I refuse to call them the 1948 Arabs. It is an Israeli term, actually. They are Palestinians. They are a part of the Palestinian people, and the final Palestinian national solution will not ignore them at all. They are part of us. It is true that they have Israeli citizenship, but they are part of our people. They may have no role in the negotiations now, but when they participate in their national actions in the areas where they are, that contributes to the final solution of the Palestinian issue. Their role is far beyond this. Now they have no role in the direct negotiations, although they are now in Israel. But the final solution will define their role.

[Diyab] What does the PLO think they will do in the elections?

[Ramlawi] We tried very hard for our brothers in the 1948 area to come together on one election list. We tried very hard and had agreed with them by way of contacting them in groups. There was an agreement for them to join in one list to strengthen their presence in the Knesset, and their role in the Knesset, too. We had a great hope that that would happen, but very regrettably, it did not happen.

One list gives power. All of the votes gather around it. It boosts the number of Palestinian Knesset members. It is preferable for us to have 15 or 20 members, rather than four or five. But it seems that their internal conflicts were too great for them to gather around one list and get into the Knesset.

[Diyab] You are from Jaffa. Does Nabil al-Ramlawi dream of returning to Jaffa?

[Ramlawi] Of course, without the slightest doubt.

[Diyab] That means you want Jaffa?

[Ramlawi] Of course. I am from Jaffa and will not stop, not me, or my son, or my son's son.

[Diyab] But that conflicts with what is going on in the negotiations.

[Ramlawi] Why? According to the partition of Resolution 181, Jaffa is Arab.

[Diyab] And the right of return?

[Ramlawi] The right of return, in Resolution 194, was enacted in 1948 and still applies now. It is a right reaffirmed by the General Assembly from 1948 and still applies now. It is supported by the United States, the Russian Federation, and all the countries of the world, except for Israel. America constantly reaffirms this resolution. The White House spokesman stated U.S. support for this resolution recently, which stirred Israeli resentment and compelled the American administration to retreat from its statement. But the first statement indicated support for it.

[Diyab] Jaffa was in the partition, but Haifa was not.

[Ramlawi] Haifa was not in the partition, that is true, but when we speak of international legitimacy as the solution to the problem, we are dealing with reality in order to move forward, to realize our goals and national rights in Palestine. So when we speak of Resolution 181, it means the partition our people rejected outright, with reason, of course—our people's faith that Palestine is Arab. But politics is based on realism, and when we say it is based on reality, that does not mean we are abandoning our rights. But realism is connected to gradualism, and gradualism is the basis of political action.

"New Order" Will Not Last

[Diyab] The New World Order—what is the PLO's position on it? Where does Palestine stand on it?

[Ramlawi] First, it must be clear that the new world order is an international order in which America alone rules and controls through total hegemony over the Security Council, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. It is trying to impose its political, economic, and legal ideas on the world there, by any means, including military means, first, in order to ensure the continued maintenance of its interests, and secondly, the interests of its present allies. This will not last. The peoples and nations of the world will sooner or later reject this kind of control, of one country over the world. Palestine was the backbone of the old world order and may be the backbone of the new world order even more than it was with the old world order, because the new world order, led by the United States, is based on the claim that it

aims for stability and peace, and the claim that it is based on guaranteeing human rights and the right of self-determination. It is in my interest for these goals to be realized—I mean in the Palestinian interest—for there to be peace and stability, which I believe can be achieved only on the basis of justice. If justice is not achieved for peoples, how can stability and peace be guaranteed? People will remain rebellious, and the fighting and killing will continue. The new world order uses the slogan of stability, peace, and the resolution of problems by peaceful means. I am not against that at all. The new world order speaks of human rights and self-determination. For your information, all of the principles of human rights in history have rested on people's self-determination as a legal right and international principle. When the Palestinian people enjoy the right of self-determination and when a just peace prevails, the problem will be over. So we support this. If the new world order is based on these principles and works towards them, it is difficult for us not to go along with it. But I do not see the United States pursuing the application of these principles, at least so far, especially when it ignores the UN's decisions and the principles of international law that represents the protective basis of these principles, with regard to the Palestine question.

[Diyab] But the new world order is unilateral.

[Ramlawi] Of course, while that may be the case now, it will not be after a short time—it may be no more than seven years. The world, neither the advanced countries, nor the Third World countries, will accept it, because they are peoples who want to enjoy their freedom. They do not want a policeman standing over them, giving them orders. Thus we find that the Europeans, deep down, are against this order, driven by one country like the United States. When we look at the positions of Third World countries in international forums, we find that these countries have a horror of the dangers of the new world order. It makes these countries feel it is an order that threatens their independence and progress because it rejects their enjoyment of their rights as nations; their right to development, rejected by the countries of the North; their right to safeguard their independence, scorned by America and the countries of the North; their right to safeguard the environment of their countries, which the countries of the North work to destroy; etc. There is a revulsion throughout the world toward the United States, particularly in the Third World countries. But at this stage, it seems that these countries are unable to do anything but await a possible opportunity to do something, and it will happen. The current situation will not last, nor will the hegemony of the United States.

In the mind of man everything changes. This is reflected in the Palestinian issue, in the negotiations, and the current conspiracy.

PLO Reportedly Seeking New Headquarters Site

92P40279A Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew
4 Sep 92 p 2

[Article by Shlomo Papirblatte; Paris]

[Text] The PLO headquarters, which is currently located in Tunis, will be forced to seek another site in another country. This is after state authorities informed the Palestinian leadership that they will not renew the 1982 agreement allowing the PLO to operate from Tunis. The agreement between the PLO and Tunis was signed following the evacuation from Beirut.

The informed sources in Paris who reported this pointed out that the PLO leadership tried to pressure the Tunisian Government to allow them to stay. According to them no agreement places time limits on "hospitality" offered to PLO headquarters in a country.

However, these pressure tactics were rejected recently and the Tunisians indicated that, in 1982, when the organization's leadership arrived in the country, the agreement between Tunis and the PLO spoke of a period of 10 years, no more.

Meanwhile, Yasir 'Arafat has already looked into the possibility of transferring the organization's offices to Jordan. This was, however, immediately rejected by the leadership in Amman. There are two other possibilities: the first is Yemen, and the second, if there is no other choice, is Baghdad.

Hamas Statement on National Honor Charter

92AE0629B London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 22 Aug p 5

[Article by Salah al-Diri]

[Text] Two Hamas Islamic resistance movement officials announced that they will file an appeal with the Israeli Higher Court of Justice after the Israeli military authorities had banned them from leaving the Gaza Strip for Jordan.

Mahmud Zahhar and 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi said in a press conference they held in Gaza that on Wednesday the Israeli military authorities had banned them from leaving for Amman for no reason.

Al-Zahhar said that this is considered "a violation of human rights," adding that "we will go to the Israeli Higher Court of Justice in order to secure our basic right to go to Amman and to return."

The Islamic trend leaders have criticized the "national honor charter" which the nationalist forces under the PLO leadership have reached and which was declared last Monday with the aim of organizing relations between the nationalist forces and activists in the Palestinian arena.

Mahmud al-Zahhar, a leader of the Islamic trend close to the Hamas movement, said that none of his Islamist

colleagues has been invited to participate in drafting the charter in question. He said the proclaimed charter contains articles which he would not approve if he were invited.

The proponents of the "national honor charter" stressed during a press conference at which they proclaimed their endorsement of the charter and the charter's preamble that they will seek to contact the other forces, including Hamas movement which did not sign the charter, in order to seek their participation and agree with them on a "general national charter" that would embrace all the political forces active in the Palestinian national and religious field. The proclaimed National Honor Charter is subtitled:

"Toward creating a comprehensive and general National Honor Charter." The title is considered a preamble to the desired general charter.

Al-Zahhar said this article gives any person an opportunity to violate the religious traditions without being held accountable. No Muslim would accept this.

With regard to what the article in question said concerning the "consensus of all the forces," al-Zahhar wondered who would establish such consensus. He added: "In case such consensus is reached among all the forces and the view of these forces proved to be contrary to the religious beliefs, will such consensus be reached?"

Al-Zahhar said: "We should have been sitting together from the beginning, participating in the drafting of the charter so that it would not be contrary to religious principles, despite differences in religious views."

When asked about his earlier opinion that is opposed to written charters among the active forces in the occupied territories, al-Zahhar said that he actually does not support the idea of writing a charter. He added that "there is already a charter, which is the best of all charters, namely the holy Koran in which the people believe."

He added, however, that there is no objection to having a written charter, provided that it is not contrary to the people's belief, namely the Islamic creed.

Mahmud al-Zahhar criticized the charter's call for "the establishment of a higher national body that would be the authority entrusted with following up the situation in the Gaza Strip." He said: "In effect, this public authority is a substitute for the existing formulas that are capable of meeting the requirements, needs, and problems of the situation in Gaza." Al-Zahhar wondered: "Why have a higher national authority to replace the national institutions, rather than boosting and activating these institutions that are now inactive?" He added: "We can imagine how can such an authority be established and the proportion of active forces in it, and how we can abolish the role of the existing institutions." [as published]

IRAQ

Saddam Compared to Shi'ite Imam Husayn*92AE0595A Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
10 Jul 92 pp 1,5*

[Unattributed article entitled "The Inspired Exemplar"]

[Text] Today is the tenth of holy Muharram, on which we must recall the martyrdom of Imam Husayn son of 'Ali, peace be upon them both, the anniversary of the genuine militant stand adopted by the Lord of Martyrs as he fought injustice and corruption, and defended truth and the divine faith. He achieved the greatest exploit in sacrifice, devotion, and adherence to principle.

The Battle of al-Taff, whose radiant lessons and meanings we recall today with glory and pride, remains one of the most honorable heroic battles in Arab Islamic history, not only because of the noble and divine values and meanings it reaffirmed, but because it embodied, with a greater and more glorious truth, the concepts of the defense of the faith, patience in the face of adversities, and constant steadfastness until martyrdom, and gave an inspired example of adhering to truth, fighting evil, and struggling against oppression and oppressors.

When we remember the extent of the determination of the glorious Arab Prophet Muhammad, God's blessings and peace be upon him, and honor Imam 'Ali, God honor him, for challenging and rejecting tyranny, for his commitment to a principled stand, however exorbitant the cost would be, despite the clear discrepancy in numbers between the friends and family of the Imam on one side, and his enemies on the other; when we remember all these facts, the greatness of Husayn's sacrifice, and of his noble, heroic stand, becomes more profoundly clear to us.

Yes, Imam Husayn refused to retreat before evil, or to give in to it; he achieved adherence to truth and redemption for the faith and principles. He consecrated himself, his values, and instruction, to Islam, and became the greatest example of adherence to principle and sacrifice, for the sake of truth. He fought until martyrdom, and his memory has stayed eternally alive in the consciences of all the faithful, while his murders earned nothing but shame and disgrace.

Thus the memory of the events of al-Taff come as we are still involved in the great encounter of the Mother of Battles, and courageously and faithfully resist the most vicious, hostile, conspiratorial plans aimed at our existence, honor, and holy places. We face a tyrannical and inhumane blockade unprecedented in history. This fragrant anniversary increases our perseverance and strengthens our faith in the truth of our path and preparedness more and more to stand by the road we have chosen and the slogans we declare. Events and developments have proven their correctness, in spite of all the kinds of pressure, conspiracy, and robbery pursued by our enemies against us.

Because the martyrdom of Imam Husayn is a calm beacon to all strugglers for truth and principle, and a source of

inspiration to all sincere faithful defending the values and true and tolerant teachings of Islam, our great people, behind the banner of Imam Husayn's descendant, the valiant Commander Saddam Husayn, is still inspired by this anniversary, and derives instruction and lessons as it continues its heroic jihad and rebuild what was destroyed by the despicable aggressors and strengthen its splendid steadfastness, despite all its sufferings and generous sacrifices. It has become proverbial among nations for its jihad, organization, and challenge to the imperialist West. This is its faithful and ideological role, which wins it the wonder and gratitude of all the world's peoples struggling for freedom, honor, justice, and progress.

Economic Issues Discussed in Meeting With Saddam*92AE0599A Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
4 Aug 92 p 3*

[Article: "Greater Production and Self-Sufficiency" by Sa'id 'Abbud al-Samarra'i]

[Text] In the private meeting chaired by President Commander Saddam Husayn on June 24, attended by some officials of the banking system, university professors, and specialized experts in those banks, some retired with long experience, banking and economic subjects and issues were discussed, which deeply engrossed the interest of those active in the state's economic agencies because of their clear influence on the country's economic course in its current circumstances—the economic blockade that the American administration and its ally, England, in particular, insist upon.

The economic problems created by this blockade, including what is being felt by ordinary citizens in their daily lives due to its effect on their living, and effects which are not directly felt, but which are eventually reflected in the worsening of living conditions such as the continual deficit in the government's public budget, particularly in the industrial sector, are all a result of the unjust economic blockade imposed on our country and our people.

Some of those present at the meeting spoke up to address these problems and conditions, both explaining and justifying them, and offering solutions. President Commander Saddam Husayn joined in with his practical, valuable proposals, and his helpful manner in setting out the problems, asking about them, and creating suitable solutions, enriched the debate and showed the depth of his broad interest in the economic issue in Iraq and the nature of the current phase it is going through.

The following issues and subjects came up in the meeting:

1. The subject of raising salaries, given inflation.
2. Amending the tax code.
3. Increasing bank interest.

4. The role of commercial banks in lending, and industrial and agricultural activities.

Although these topics are some of the issues the Iraqi economy is facing, they actually are interrelated and linked to one another. Thus the treatment for the problems of this economy must be seen as total and comprehensive. In fact, the Iraqi economy, because of the conditions of the aggressive war imposed by American-Atlantic aggression, and the blockade in force for nearly two years [which have] created a disruption in its public budget as a result of various factors concocted and completed between them in order to determine, in the end, the exact nature of this disruption. Among these factors is the proportionality between public spending, state resources, and the disruption of the development relations among the sectors of the national economy, and finally the disproportionality between the money supply and the actual growth in the supply of goods and services. This caused the deterioration in the phenomenon of inflation, with the attendant distortion in the structure of national income distribution, the deviation of investment trends, and social pressures.

How is it possible to deal with this disruption in the balance of the economy? Is it possible to use employ methods of financial policy—among them, amending the tax system and issuing government bonds, selling off government assets to the public to absorb this huge surplus of monetary liquidity ensuing from the rise in public spending without that being accompanied by a rise in total local yield? Or is it possible to use monetary policy, by shrinking the money supply, increasing bank interest rates, and broadening the banking network throughout the country with the aim of increasing the public's dealings with the banking system, reducing noncompulsory consumer membership, and guiding confidence aimed at production activity?

As regards salary hikes, despite the fact that this means may help to find a suitable solution to the economic and social deterioration that has overtaken government employees with fixed incomes who represent, in terms of numbers, a relatively large weight in the national income structure in Iraq; although this increase, it appears, has not led to an improvement of those employees, and, from another standpoint, boosts the rate of inflation. Also, this increase is not linked to an increase in control over the level of productivity; so it will push production costs higher, and, accordingly, raise the costs at which goods and services are sold. However, the state's building on this policy of "salary hikes," contains openly or tacitly the idea of coexisting with inflation. It is an inevitable step, and in the conditions the country is experiencing, raising salaries in actual fact is a just demand and answers the legitimate aspirations of a wide sector of citizens crushed by the recent wave of price rises. It is also consistent, of course, with the notions of social justice that inflation abuses; but here we hasten to warn that salary increases will become absolutely meaningless if prices keep rising continually, at a rate higher than the change in the salaries. In general, we see that necessity now demands the commitment to adjust the salary and pension

structure in such a way as to compensate employees and pensioners with fixed or limited incomes for the loss affecting their real income because of the layers of inflation, which are rooted originally in the blockade.

The fact is that the clear relative decrease in salaries has now become both an economic and social problem. Solving this problem requires two things:

First: social justice. It is not acceptable for us to leave societal groups that represent a negligible weight in the country's society easy prey to the fangs of inflation, which would eat up their incomes, lower their level of consumption, and turn the squeezings into profits and benefits for other societal groups, such as merchants and middlemen.

Second: guaranteeing the continued turning of the wheels of labor in the government system, and in units of the socialist sector, requires salary hikes for workers in this system, who now exist at the subsistence level, at the minimum standard of living. They are constantly liable to continual slides in their economic and social circumstances, with the worsening wave of inflation. If wage rates are not increased, there is the danger of non-renewal of the workforces active in these fields, and the danger of their leaving their workplaces to work in the private sector. This is what is actually occurring now, or for other trades to disappear with higher wages, or to emigrate or work abroad. These are things that do, of course, threaten the turning of the wheels of production in the government system, and hamper the rise in the level of productivity and increased production.

Thus, in light of these two matters, we believe that alert economic and social farsightedness definitely mandates an increase in the salaries of limited and fixed income workers in the government sector and the socialist sector, and for a qualified professional agency including mostly experts and researchers participating in the fields of health, nutrition, housing, and in the finance and social fields, to estimate the amount of the desired pay hike.

As to financial policy, at this stage the situation requires an increase in the tax effort. This does not necessarily mean increasing the volume and rate of the taxes the government exacts from the national income. An increase in the volume of the tax would yield an increased rate of the national income with a commensurate reduction in the volume of gross income available for spending in other sectors (the family and business sectors). This is quickly reflected in checking the defiance of the development of total demand; thus the increase in effort or the tax burden is one of the best means of leading to reduction of the budget deficit. Government authorities are given greater room for maneuver than they have when pressure and guidance are the rule with government spending. While the greater part of tax revenue in Iraq is comprised of indirect tax, imposed on consumers of goods and services without regard to different wage brackets, its rate has reached a 1988 tax total of nearly 71.4 percent. Thus it appears difficult to improve performance and raise the tax effort in the area of indirect taxes, with the exception of reviewing the structure of customs tariffs and

production fees, allowing it to check runaway consumer luxury spending in the family sector and as regards direct taxation. There is more room for maneuver and movement with just financial policy, with the objective of raising the efficiency of the tax effort in the Iraqi economy. It is noteworthy that there is a significant amount of high income from inflation, "partnerships," and the exploitation of the circumstances of the economic blockade not affected by seriously unfair taxes. There is room to activate the tax effort by raising tax rates and increasing allowances in the income tax code, while reducing tax exemptions, imposing a tax on agricultural incomes, and improving the means of linking the income tax yield due on business sector profits, incomes from professionals and the self-employed, and those whose profits rose significantly in recent years, especially since the imposition of the economic blockade in August, 1990. The president commander asked, in the meeting, about the importance of the rise in commercial bank interest rates with the aim of encouraging people to increase their deposits in them. It is a known fact that in normal circumstances, a rise in interest rates can achieve the desired result. But in the present time, because of Iraqi economic circumstances, the shrinkage in individual investments, and inflation, increasing interest rates would not avail. It would increase the cost of commercial bank loans, thus pushing up production costs, raising prices, and aggravating inflationary pressures—which is what we must avoid in this circumstances.

As to the question of whether or not the commercial banking laws allow the granting of loans to the agricultural and industrial sectors, i.e., granting medium- and long-term loans, in Iraq there are specialized banks that do that. Commercial banks do not offer these loans, because their actual practices and regulations do not permit long term lending, just as, due to their holding the public's short-term deposits and honoring their commitments to depositors, they cannot grant this type of loan, lest a decrease in their resources should render them unable to pay their commitments to depositors.

The president commander then spoke, with his keen discernment, objectivity, and clear, comprehensive vision, of the coming course of the Iraqi economy for the creation of self-development in Iraq, whose basic content is self-reliance in skills and creating personal production capacity insuring the provision of basic needs, particularly for industry, as first priority, to achieve self-sufficiency in the context of cultural uniqueness, based on our ancient culture, the best in our human heritage, and its basic means, the development of human abilities in this country in such a way as to insure their effective participation in production. He said, "We are heading towards a great plan in the industrial field in order to provide great possibilities, and great and small factories."

Regarding the essential elements of industrialization, and their absence in circumstances such as those the Iraqi economy is currently facing, particularly the scarcity of basic commodities, he said, "We create the primary resource in Iraq, just as the other world created it. We have a distinction above many people; many of them rose with

their industries but did not own the source except some cases, as in Japan, for example. Some did not have a source of energy or primary resources, so why should we not extract it, when we own it? This means that the independent development Iraq is currently undertaking is self-reliance, or maximum reliance on development factors, on manpower capacity, with its professional abilities, talents, and skills; natural and financial resources, material possibilities, and the ample production requisities available in this country, all of which are playing a part part in the creation of the Iraqi miracle in rebuilding and reconstruction, and attaining the best means of mobilizing more of them and enhancing their competence."

In summary, the thoughts and opinions expressed in the special meeting all comprise a direction for the building of a developed Iraqi economy, opening the way for a bright future, that this heroic country might occupy the place it deserves among nations, and restore its glorious past with the establishment of an economic system achieving progress and advancement, building a standard of living befitting our citizens, increasing our resources, and spurring the people's abilities to build and give.

JORDAN

Oil Imports in 1991 Rise to 747 Million Dinars

92AE0622A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
12 Aug 92 p 10

[Unattributed article: "Jordan's Oil Bill Rises to 747 Million Dinars"]

[Text] Amman—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Bureau—The bill for oil imported by Jordan has risen. In 1991, the bill for [oil] derivatives rose to 747 million dinars, constituting 20 percent of the total value of Jordan's imports or nearly 40 percent of Jordan's total exports. It is expected that the bill will amount to nearly 300 million dinars this year. The treasury may be forced to re-subsidize oil derivatives if prices remain at their current level.

The Jordanian Oil Refinery has already announced that its profits for 1991 amounted to just four percent because of high production costs and that it has been compelled to use the voluntary reserve to distribute a 7.5-percent dividend to shareholders.

Article Reviews Situation After New Parties Law

92AE0622B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
24 Aug 92 p 5

[Unattributed article: "In Wake of Ratification of Jordan's Parties Law: Five Political Tendencies Will Have Presence in Arena; Center Has Begun Difficult Dialogue; Left Has Entered Clouded Phase"]

[Text] Amman—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Jordanian House of Representatives has passed the parties law after a labor that has been as long as the life of the house which is about to complete the third year of its term. What is

surprising, as observers have noticed, is that the popular presence with which the House of Representatives' balconies had been expected to be jammed at this historic moment, at least for the political parties, has been a lot smaller than expected. As one observer has noted, the historic moment has passed in the absence of the parties themselves. This presence was confined to a number of journalists, contrary to the expectations that had been saying optimistically that the politicized public would so overcrowd the House of Representatives' balconies that the Ministry of Interior authorities took precautionary security measures to control the expected popular presence.

The reasons that motivated the parties' founding leaders to avoid attending the historic session that had been long awaited are not known precisely yet. But from examining and analyzing some given facts and indicators that have accompanied this phase of Jordan's political life throughout the past three years, it can be said that the eagerness to offer political plans, which characterized the recent period, is no longer there. Those aspiring for leadership have begun to deliberate and make calculations before going ahead with offhanded ideas. According to political analysts and observers, one cannot ignore the outcome of the Ma'daba election and the victory the Muslim Brotherhood candidate scored over the party coalition. This outcome has proven that only a firm and serious organization is capable of elevating deputies to the parliament and, consequently, of participating in political life and influencing the political scene.

Those Trying Their Luck

Despite this, some of the people whom observers have called "those trying their luck" will form parties which aren't expected to have a presence before they vanish with time.

Observers take into their account the 1989 elections when nearly 800 candidates competed for 80 House of Representatives' seats. Many of those candidates did not even have the slightest chance of winning under that particular condition. This will also apply to the parties. If the expectations come true, five political tendencies, and no more, will have a presence in the political arena. These tendencies will, in the analysts' opinion, be able to elevate candidates to the House of Representatives. But in the short run, these tendencies may not be able to agree and to engage in political action through parties.

If the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization with the strongest presence in the arena, has been able to develop the Islamic Action Front formula, then the other tendencies, which range from left to center, are still engaged in constant and ceaseless dialogue to develop a permanent formula.

Centrist Leaders

Jordan's centrist political tendency, some of whose leaders rushed to offer party plans at an early phase, continues to be engaged in a difficult dialogue for unity among some of its factions. But there are analysts who do not expect this unification to take the form of a single

party, not even of a single party grouping. They expect that this dialogue will produce three groupings, at least.

The given facts and circumstances of political life have produced throughout the past 20 years contradictions based on personal backgrounds and these contradictions will impede the centrist tendency's ability to emerge with a unified formula. One of these given facts, for example, is that there have come into existence so-called centrist leaders who have held top state positions and who compete among themselves to get the utmost favor and trust of the political decision-maker in Jordan. Moreover, some of these leaders rely on origins that wish to leap to the forefront of political action in the coming phase, taking advantage of their origins and of the official good graces they have gained with the higher authority.

Split Within Left

As for Jordan's left, conditions seem to be more clouded. This is because the left is experiencing severe division within its ranks. It has even seen a split within one of its main parties, namely the People's Democratic Party—Hashad. This party has split into two parties following the split of a Palestinian faction into two groups: The Nayif Hawatimah group and the Yasir 'Abdrabbuh group. In this regard, one of this party's leaders has expressed doubts that the Jordanian Ministry of Interior will agree to license either party, relying on a article in the Jordanian parties law that stipulates that "there shall be no organizational or financial tie to any non-Jordanian circle." This is an article that may be used against the party on the grounds that HASHAD has been tied to two branches of the DFLP since the split.

Hashad and the Popular Unity Party, which emanates in turn from the PFLP, tried recently to adjust their positions as Jordanian parties equal under and compatible with the provisions of the charter and of the parties law. But their leaders continue to doubt legitimately that the government will be convinced of this argument, even though political observers find it unlikely that the government will open a battle with the Jordanian parties from Palestinian extraction, considering that these parties are present in the real Jordanian political life.

However, this issue will continue to top the agenda of the ongoing developments among these forces and will top the election slogans.

Other issues, seemingly much more delicate and difficult, stand in the face of uniting the leftist forces that are facing this problem. These issues include the position on a political settlement, considering that some of the forces approve of it, some have reservations on it, and others reject it. This is in addition to the conventional organizational disputes and to the competition for positions.

However, expectations indicate that unification efforts will be made among the various forces and that many people will think long and hard before they apply to form parties.

Article Reports Leftist Parties Losing Ground

92AE0622C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
27 Aug 92 p 5

[Unattributed article: "Jordanian Leftist Organizations"]

[Text] Amman—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—A joke reiterated in the Jordanian circles is that Dr. Ya'qub Zayadin, the Jordanian Communist Party secretary general, is the first and last communist in Jordan. But the joke is not far from the reality. Even though communists have freedom of action in Jordan, their slogan continues to be rejected sharply by the conservative Jordanian society.

The Jordanian leftist movements' deceptive use of such words as "progressive, democracy, renewal" and "popular" to replace words such as communism or Marxism in their publications and rallies has not availed in enhancing their reputation in Jordan. Moreover, the mere mention of 'socialism' evokes smiles.

The only tune the leftists use well in Jordan is the call to liberate the occupied territories. Numerous Jordanian leftist parties have emanated from Palestinian revolutionary organizations. The Jordanian People's Democratic Party [Hashad] is nothing but an extension of the DFLP and the Popular Unity Party is also nothing but an extension of the PFLP. Hashad's and the Popular Unity Party's attempts to depict themselves as two independent parties are simply futile because they continue to have organizational and financial ties to the fronts.

The Zayadin-led Jordanian Communist Party has not been able to maintain its unity and it has been subjected to repeated splits, the latest led by 'Isa Madanat, a member of the Jordanian House of Representatives. The party cadres have accused its leadership of engaging in some sort of inappropriate dictatorship by virtue of its control of the salaries paid to fulltime members. This is in addition to accusations made regarding the leadership's rigid communist mentality which cannot comprehend the possibility of reform or rejuvenation in the party ideology.

Three leftist parties, namely the Jordanian Democratic Party which was led by 'Ali 'Amir who had split from the Jordanian People's Party, the Progressive Party which was led by Fawwaz al-Zu'bi, and the Communist Workers Party, which was led by Nizar al-Kayid, have united in a single party, called the Jordanian Communist Party, in order to overcome the phenomenon of the collapse of small parties that enjoy no popularity whatsoever in Jordan. The coalition that combines the majority of the leftist parties is called the Jordanian Arab National Democratic Grouping.

Most leftist members of the House of Representatives have been able to gain their seats only because of the distribution of the election map which dictates the presence of Christian candidates, especially in Amman, al-Zarqa', and Irbid.

It seems that the Jordanian leftist tendency is the weakest political tendency in the parties arena. At present, the Islamist tendency leads the forces influencing the scene. Meanwhile, the conservative tendency is trying to catch up with the Islamist tendency with evident intelligence and skill whereas the pan-Arabist tendency lurches about, relying on some general Arab developments.

It is well known that the leftist tendency lost its biggest ally with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East Europe countries, a fact which has contributed to diminishing this tendency's role. The conservative tendency has its roots in the Jordanian tribes and the Islamist tendency derives some support from a number of Arab and Islamic countries.

Jordanian politicians say that the leftist tendency has to omit the word 'communism' from its dictionary forever in order to succeed and that the parties' leaders have to be replaced in order to infuse the parties with new blood that abounds with ideas of reform and renewal to take over the leadership because the current leaders suffer from Marx' and Lenin's legacy and from the concept of central economy and bureaucracy.

In a related development, the leftist parties' papers and publications have completely failed to attract any public. AL-AHALI, Hashad's organ, incurs big weekly losses because of its small circulation. AL-JAMAHIR, organ of the Jordanian Communist Party, looks like a badly-written party publication. NIDA' AL-WATAN, issued by the National Unity Party, has failed to attract any non-partisan readership. Meanwhile, AL-MASIRAH, issued by the Jordanian Progressive Democratic party, hasn't been far from the failure of its sister papers.

Jordanian leftist parties also suffer from small membership. If the majority of these parties fail to develop a formula that unifies them, they will one day find themselves without any members.

Jordanian partisans say that it is really interesting that the Jordanian communist struggled forcefully for his ideology under conditions which exposed him to arrest and pursuit prior to the democratic phase only to find himself nowadays embarrassed to reveal his identity frankly and openly to the Jordanian masses.

Government Bans NIDA' AL-WATAN Issue

92P40277A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
14 Sep 92 p 4

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Office of Publications and Publishing has banned the distribution of the latest issue of NIDA' AL-WATAN [Call of the Nation] magazine for publishing an extensive commentary on the arrest of Deputies Layth Shubaylat and Ya'qub Qirrish and another in which the magazine criticized price hikes on government-supplied goods. The magazine, which holds a foreign license although it is published in Jordan, also discussed the growth of a

number of armed organizations in Jordan and the relationship between what is happening in Jordan to what is happening in Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia concerning the fundamentalist groups' activity.

LEBANON

Curriculum Vitae of Ambassador Hasan al-'Abdallah

92AE0559B Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 6 Jul 92 p 3

[Article: "Ambassador Husayn al-'Abdallah"]

[Text]

- Born in al-Khiyahm, Lebanon, on 22 July 1919.
- Ended high school (in Beirut) in 1937.
- Higher studies at the Electrotechnic Institute of Grenoble (Institute electrotechnique de Grenoble), 1937-43, and then at the Hydraulic Engineering College (Ecole de Ingenieurs Hydrauliciens, Diplome ingenieur I.E.G).
- Engineer entrusted with irrigation works in South Lebanon (al-Litani project supervised by the French High Commission at the time).
- Adviser to the Kingdom of Yemen, 1947.
- Engineering department head (with the rank of manager at Lebanon's Ministry of Public Works) in charge of the South Lebanon area, 1947-50.
- Member of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, chairman of the Parliamentary Public Works Committee throughout his term as deputy. 1950-52.
- Minister of post, telegraph, and telephones, 1952-53.
- Private research office, 1953-58.
- He participated with several establishments (including C.A.T. Company) in implementing important projects in Arab countries.
- Member of the Lebanon Electricity Company's Board of Director (Administrateur) until 1966.
- Assigned general director of Lebanon's Higher Customs Council, an extremely important economic council, 1958-65.
- Assigned to this post, assigned acting general director at the Ministry of Agriculture, 1964. Throughout this period, al-'Abdallah headed or participated in Lebanese delegations to international technical conferences (UNCTAD, GATT, FAO).
- In view of these international activities, he ultimately moved to the diplomatic corps.
- Appointed ambassador at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1965-66.
- Appointed ambassador to Tunisia, 1966-67.
- Appointed Lebanese ambassador to Iran and Afghanistan, resident in Tehran, 1967-70.
- At the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1970-72.
- Appointed resident Lebanese ambassador to Nigeria and non-resident ambassador to a number of African countries, 1972-78.
- Lebanon's ambassador in Cairo and permanent delegate to the Arab League, 1978-79.

- In May 1979, appointed Lebanon's permanent delegate to the Arab League, when the league moved to Tunis, and ambassador to Tunisia.
- Participated in and headed Lebanese delegations to a number of conferences and appointed member to a number of delegations, including Lebanon's delegation to the UN General Assembly in New York.
- Lebanon's representative in the Afro-Arab Dialogue (24-member) Committee since 1977.

MOROCCO

Specifications, Cost of Power Plant

92AF1238A Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 28 Aug 92 p 4

[Article by Abdelmajid Smaili: "Thermal Option at the Jorf Lasfar Site, a Genuine Industrial Growth Center: 8 Billion Dirhams for the Work Under Way on the Country's Biggest Plant"; first paragraph is LA VIE ECONOMIQUE introduction]

[Text] Once it is completed, the Jorf power plant will be a huge one and have a 1,980-megawatt [MW] potential, or close to seven times the potential of the Mohammedia plant, currently the kingdom's biggest.

The National Electricity Office's [ONE] medium- and long-term capital program for electrical energy production works includes a certain number of thermal sections, each one being 330 MW. Six sections of this type are planned for the Jorf Lasfar site. The first two will be operational by the end of 1994 and mid-1995, respectively, resulting in an installed capacity of 660 MW, which will make it the country's biggest.

Twenty-two Percent of Total Installed Capacity

Included among the criteria that argued in favor of the choice of the site for the new power plant are the prospects offered by the port for importing coal and heavy fuel under good economic conditions and electric energy needs linked to the region's major industrial growth center as well as the prospect of developing the existing infrastructures. This new power plant will run on coal; however all the necessary equipment has been provided for to allow the burning of heavy fuel. With regard to the use of natural gas, that can be provided for by means of certain alterations. The port of Jorf Lasfar, which can receive 100,000-tonne ships, is perfectly suited for the importation and storage of both the coal and the heavy fuel needed for the plant's operation, whose annual production of electrical energy will be 4.2 billion kw, which represents close to a third of annual national production and about 22 percent of the total installed capacity. Initially, running and maintaining the plant will guarantee close to 400 permanent jobs.

The power plant itself includes, in particular, two steam generators with their auxiliaries (mills and electrostatic

filters), two turbines with their condensers, two alternators, two main transformers, and two tapping transformers, a coal bunker linked to the port by two conveyor belts, a pool to provide coolant water, a turbine exhaust inlet for that water after it has been used, a chimney with two outlets, a command center, and water purification facilities.

A French-Spanish Group Chosen

The overall cost of the project, including the electrical station, the system's junction lines, highway and railway links, drinking water supply, housing for the operations staff, customs duties, and taxes is on the order of 8 billion dirhams. This figure has been fully financed by France and Spain up to about 43 percent of state funding and the rest by commercial credits.

The group made up of GEC Alsthom (France), Babcock-Wilcox Espanola, and Dragados (Spain) was selected from among four to build this new power plant, which will be the country's largest.

Mr. Abderrahmane Naji, ONE's New Director General

Born in 1937 in the province of Beni Mellal, Mr. Naji Abderrahmane received his primary and secondary education in Casablanca. From 1956 to 1958 he attended classes at the Lycee Lyautey in Casablanca to prepare for

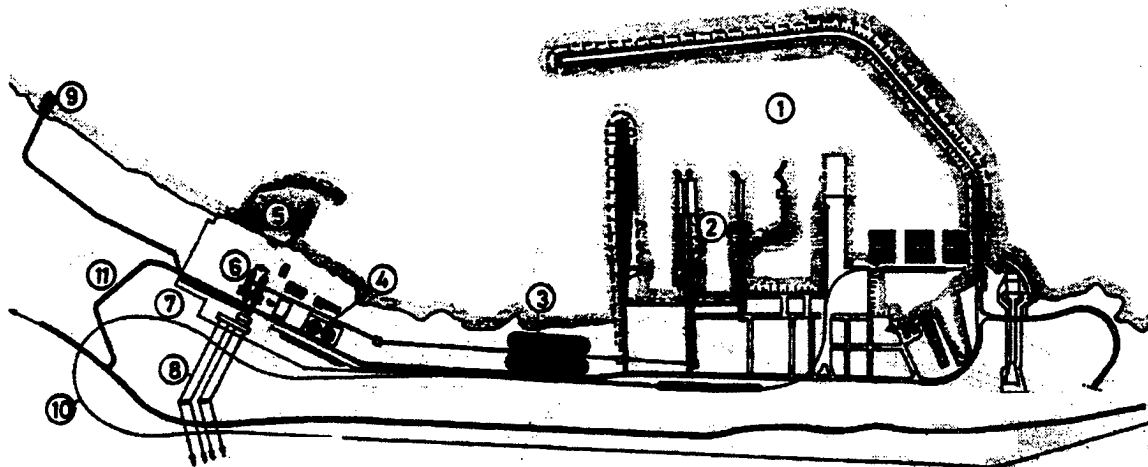
admission to the top French engineering schools. After having attended the Advanced National School for Electrical Engineering (the Polytechnic Institute of Toulouse), he earned his engineering degree in electrical engineering in 1963 and in the same year completed his B.S. in physics.

In 1963 he began work at Moroccan Electrical Energy, which in the same year became the National Electricity Office. At that agency he was in charge of maintaining high and very high tension stations before assuming the position of hydraulic production service chief.

Beginning in 1969 and until his appointment by His Majesty the King as ONE director general on 8 July 1992, Mr. Naji was the director of distribution at this agency.

As such he has actively helped set up and bring to fruition major rural electrification programs.

Decorated in 1965 with the Order of Merit, exceptional class, and in 1987 with the Order of the Throne, with the rank of chevalier, Mr. Abderrahmane Naji is married and is the father of three children.



KEY:

1. Port of Jorf Lasfar
2. Coal unloading dock
3. Coal bunker
4. Heavy fuel storage number 2
5. Marine surge tank

6. Main plant
7. Electrical station
8. Energy discharge lines
9. Plant discharge channel
10. Rail lines
11. Plant access road

ONE: Financial Burdens; Nuclear Energy Planned
92AF1238B Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 28 Aug 92 p 3

[Article by Djamila Bouchra and Abdelmajid Smaili: "3.8 Billion Dirhams Owed the National Electricity Office!"; first two paragraphs are LA VIE ECONOMIQUE introduction]

[Text] Energy: Difficulties are forcing the [National Electricity] Office [ONE] to stagger its medium- and long-term capital program.

The problem of unpaid bills and treasury difficulties affects not just private-sector businesses but those in the public sector as well. And for the same reason: unpaid bills. The National Electricity Office suffers from the shortage of certain businesses, a shortage that has repercussions at the level of partly state-owned distribution companies. But why is the Rabat company up to date with its payments?

The file on the energy and electricity sector is one of the prime concerns of the new government. Its importance can be seen in a series of emergency measures taken at the highest level to solve those acute problems facing the sector.

Essentially these measures aim to affect both the supply and the demand for electricity. With regard to demand, it is a matter of making big users aware of the necessity of managing their needs at peak hours.

The Country's Top Investor

As for supply, initially it is anticipated that turbines running on gas-oil at Tetouan and Kenitra will be put into service until they can be run on Algerian gas, and the new units at Matmata and Jorf Lasfar are also expected to open.

These new turbines have already cost the National Electricity Office close to 2 billion dirhams, which increases the burden of investments, estimated at 24 billion dirhams between 1992 and 1997.

The ONE remains the country's top investor: every year more than 4 billion dirhams are spent to equip the sector and regulate the supply and demand for electricity.

This figure accounts for more than 60 percent of the anticipated annual turnover in 1992. Its size can be explained by a concern to respond to the demand for electricity, which doubles about every 10 years.

The Drought and Its Effects

It needs to be repeated that the imbalance grew this year as a result of the effects of the drought. The hydraulic production park is made up of a group of power plants whose installed capacity is 687 megawatts [MW].

However hydraulic power experiences fluctuations according to the stoppage refill level. This year alone 300 MW are available. As a temporary solution, and until there can be proper facilities, and in order to respond under good conditions to current demand, the ONE has chosen a connection

with the countries of the Maghreb. So in December 1990 the office signed an agreement protocol with the [Algerian] National Electricity and Gas Company [SONELGAZ], anticipating programmed exchanges as part of an annual energy purchase contract instead of a contract governed by the zero budget principle, as had been the case in 1988.

The new contract allowed for the importation of 640 gigawatts, or close to 7 percent of energy needs. For 1992 the contract anticipates the importation of 100 MW, which will make it possible in part to cover electricity deficits due to the drop in hydraulicity.

Money Owed the ONE: 380 Billion Centimes

Added to the effects of the drought are the financial problems with which the ONE has been grappling for some time.

The only shareholder in the ONE is the state. Between 1983 and 1984 it had a financial share on the order of 83 percent. But as part of the liberalization of the Moroccan economy, it totally disengaged.

Today the ONE again finds that it can finance itself only at the competitive rate of 14 percent, the remainder being financed in part by the national financial market, and close to 70 percent of the financing comes from outside loans staggered over 20 or so years. The office's labors are not at an end, since at the same time it has a debt of 130 billion centimes to the Treasury that it must pay off over a three-year period beginning in June 1993. This is a heavy debt to carry since in addition its interest rate is 12 percent. In order to cope, the ONE is wagering on the payment of the money due it, recovery of which is late in coming. Involved is a huge amount: approximately 380 billion centimes, most of which is owed by partly state-owned firms.

The latter, with the exception of the one in Rabat, owe the ONE close to 200 billion centimes.

"Delayed bill payments—eight months instead of three—and a sloppiness about regulations on the part of a number of managers of these firms are the cause of this situation," said Mr. Naji, the office's director general. Furthermore local administrations and communities, offices (the Moroccan Phosphates Office [OCP] and the National Railroad Office [ONCF]) and the ORMVA's [expansion not given] owe 60.5 and 15 billion centimes, respectively. In the mining sector (especially Kettara), the debt has climbed to 16 billion. An agreement protocol was signed between the ONE and its creditors for a short- and medium-term reimbursement.

As far as the partly state-owned firms and local administrations and communities are concerned, the deadline has been set at three years. With the Treasury a system of reimbursement by debts-money owed compensation has been adopted to clean up the financial situation.

In addition the partly state-owned firms must fulfill their obligations within the allotted time.

Mr. Naji pointed out that one of these firms has demanded more than 10 years to pay its unpaid bills, a time-limit that defies belief, he said.

From Burning Three Fuels to Nuclear Power

The office has embarked on a vast investment program to build facilities to represent a total capacity of around 1,250 MW by the end of 1996 distributed as follows: 480 MW in hydraulics, 660 MW in thermal steam, and 100 MW in gas turbines. With regard to the Jorf project, the last segment initially anticipated for the end of 1997 has been postponed to the year 2000 and been replaced by a first combined cycle unit totaling 350 MW.

Beginning in the year 2000 facilities will be able to burn three fuels so as to use coal-steam or fuel alike and will be designed to burn natural gas by means of certain alterations.

A Healthy Result

As far as prospects for using nuclear energy go, these can only be realized somewhere near the year 2010 since the maximum capacity demand on the network will reach 6,000 MW. And this will make possible the integration of the 900-MW bearing that is the competitive switchboard under today's economic conditions.

However, other conditions will have to be met to start up the first electronuclear power plant, in particular the economic competitiveness of this type of facility. This also requires the implementation of an arsenal of regulations, training the needed staff, and adapting local industry. At this rate, and given the difficulties the sector is experiencing, utilizing nuclear energy is not something that will happen tomorrow. These very difficulties are causing the office to stagger its facilities program kicking and screaming at a time when demand is increasing from year to year at a rate of 10 percent. One of the healthy results for the ONE seems to be the granting of advantages to this vital sector under the investment code that thus far has not benefited from preferential prices for the materials it uses, of which fuel accounts for 70 percent of its expenses.

Figures in Sugar Production, Consumption Reported

92AF1215A Casablanca EL WATAN in French
14 Aug 92 p 9

[Article by Amale Daoud: "Appreciable Decrease in Sugar-Loaf Consumption"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] With 495,600 tons produced in 1991, Morocco manages to cover nearly 63 percent of its sugar needs. As for sugar-loaf consumption, it dropped from 68 percent in 1978 to 52 percent in 1991.

Domestic sugar consumption increases appreciably year after year. From 359,000 tons in 1960, 470,000 tons in 1972, it rose to 781,000 tons in 1991.

In 1960, Morocco imported all the sugar-producing materials it consumed. Only refining was done locally.

A policy designed to meet needs through local production was worked out. It consisted in creating sugar refineries and

sugarbeet and sugarcane plantations in order to obtain the raw materials. The first sugar refinery, the SUNAB [expansion not given] in Sidi Slimane, was built in 1963. It was followed by 12 other sugar refineries, thus providing local means to cover 63 percent of the country's needs.

Production Increasing Faster Than Consumption

Thus, in 1991, the tonnage produced rose to 271,000 tons of raw sugar and 240,000 tons of refined sugar.

Note that, from 1980 to 1991, production increased faster than consumption; production increased by nearly 50 percent, consumption by 28 percent.

Sugar Production—First Quarter, 1991/1992

	End of June 1991	End of June 1992
Loaves	196,857	201,401
Slabs	30,083	39,225
Cubes	10,488	9,464
Granulated	176,865	160,595
Total	414,293	410,685

In addition, the annual per capita consumption remained unchanged, around 30 kg per person per year, which means that demographic growth is the main cause of the consumption increase.

However, a change was noted in the consumption patterns of the various types of sugar: whereas in 1978 sugar loaves accounted for 68 percent of all the sugar consumed, that percentage dropped to 52 percent in 1991. During the same period, the share of granulated sugar rose from 24 to 37 percent. Slab sugar and cube sugar rose from 8 to 10.5 percent.

Simultaneously with the creation of sugar refineries, a considerable effort was made with respect to sugar-producing crops. The tonnage of processed sugar-producing crops rose from 3.339 million tons in 1986 to 3.905 million tons in 1990.

But these crops are subject to the vagaries of the weather. As much of the land is still not irrigated, the drought might considerably affect production in any given year.

SUDAN

International Organizations Seen Siding With Garang

92AF1202C London Al-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Aug 92 p 5

[Associated Press story from Khartoum]

[Text] The Government of Lieutenant General 'Umar Hassan al-Bashir has accused the United Nations High Commission for Refugee Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross of neglect and collusion

with its southern foes by allowing them to use 5,000 children as "human shields" in the civil war going on in the south of the Sudan.

Mr. Husayn al-'Ubayd, President of a Sudanese government committee charged with following the case of these children, told journalists in Khartoum that the High Commission for Refugee Affairs had colluded with fighters of the "Popular Army for the Liberation of Sudan" and allowed them to recruit five thousand children residing in a refugee camp in Kenyan territory. He accused the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose headquarters is in Geneva, of failing to protect the children. He said that Sudan had asked the Secretary-General of the United Nations to look into this matter. UN officials announced last week that they did not know that fate of 3,000 children transferred to a refugee camp, of a group of 12,000 children and nearly 10,500 refugees. Sylviana Fawa [?], spokeswoman for the High Commission for Refugees in Geneva, said that the Commission thought the missing children had been recruited into the "Popular Army." Al-'Ubayd told journalists that the children had been moved to a refugee camp in Kenya, "where 5,000 of them disappeared, to reappear suddenly in the military operations area."

No Army Draft for Overseas Students

92AF1202B London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Aug 92 p 5

[Article by Maha Muhammad al-Bashir, Khartoum bureau]

[Text] The Sudanese Government has issued a decree ruling that Sudanese students abroad and citizens working abroad are exempt from compulsory [military] service, conditional on their being registered with the compulsory service authorities, and producing an exemption certificate illustrating this.

Last week, a new national service law for 1992 was issued and signed by Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, President of the "Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation."

The new law aims to "prepare regular troops for military and defensive action, or development actions, social service, or for any mission in the public interest." The second section of the law provides that the period of service, 24 months, will be reduced for graduates of universities and higher institutes or their equivalents, to 12 months. It will be reduced to 18 months for those who have completed secondary school.

Article 21 of the law's fourth section rules out the possibility of leaving the country for anyone who had already been called up for compulsory service—they may not leave the country for any reason without obtaining a certificate of waiver, exemption, postponement, or of having completed service.

Industrial Bank Director Interviewed

92AF1202A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Aug 92 p 10

[Article by 'Abd-al-Razzaq Bashir, Khartoum bureau]

[Text] The Director General of the Sudanese Industrial Bank, Mr. 'Uthman Mahjub, has said, in an exclusive statement to AL-HAYAH, that Sudan's recent economic and industrial policies aimed to support the Sudanese Industrial Bank and enable it to assume a leading role in the process of the structural reform of the industrial sector, and to provide complete financial and banking services and industrial technical services to the industrial sector.

He added that this requires an increase in the bank's capital and channeling some loans and facilities from funding institutions and friendly countries for its uses, and that the Industrial Bank has a strategy permitting it to realize its future responsibilities and aspirations.

Mahjub explained that this strategy was summarized by the spread of small industries, of craft and rural industries, the providing of the requisites and supplies for their operation, and the providing of cash and kind loans, in addition to offering needed technical and administrative advice, the establishment of engineering service centers, rental of tools, equipment, the assistance of machine power for their factories and overseeing the establishment of leading projects to achieve the structural link within the industrial sector.

He indicated that the Sudanese Industrial Bank had participated in the field of food industries by developing canning industries and fruit and vegetable centers, developing a food dehydration industry and a baby food industry from local raw materials, and expanding cold storage and modern methods of storage. He added that the bank had a special interest in providing a climate suited to local and foreign investors, particularly as Sudan was rich in raw materials.

The Director General of the bank explained that the industrial climate in Sudan was suited to all areas of industry, especially the agriculture and food areas, such as sugar and textile plants, and engineering and chemical industries.

He said that the manufacture of medicine in the Sudan had made great strides, and that self-sufficiency in 240 drugs would be achieved in the first phase of the comprehensive national strategic 1992-2002 plan. He indicated that the second phase of this strategy would have an export phase.

Mahjub added that the Industrial Bank sought the establishment of the "vaccines" and vital products project, and support for related scientific research, and establishing units to produce laboratory needs. Additionally, the bank is acting in coordination with the factories in Sudan to make the first phase of the 1992-1995 plan emphasize the improvement of the variety of industrial products and the modernization of industrial machinery and equipment, while industrial expansion would be

preceded by detailed programs and plans, practical studies, and technical and economic feasibility studies.

He said that the goals of the second phase (1995-1998) were the elimination of distortions and imbalances among subsidiary industrial sectors, the expansion in the sugar, textile, foodstuffs, leather goods, and cement fields, and the establishment of new industries, such as

assembling agricultural equipment, insecticides, petrochemicals, iron and steel. The third phase (1999-2002) will aim at the operation of basic industries such as iron, steel, and petrochemicals, the completion of the expansion in export industries, progress in product quality to meet international standards, and the achievement of a total balance between product sectors in agriculture, and the service and basic construction sectors.

SRI LANKA

Paper Views Suggestion of Raising Muslim Unit Against LTTE

BK0908104992 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
30 Jul 92 p 6

[Editorial: "No Thank You, Mr. Ashraff!"]

[Text] Sri Lanka Muslim Congress [SLMC] Leader M.H.M. Ashraff's suggestion that a Muslim Jihad Regiment be raised in the Sri Lanka Army is not likely to be accepted for reasons that Mr. Ashraff himself would appreciate. We live in a time when communal integration is a crying need and raising units of the kind advocated by the SLMC leader, apart from other self-evident dangers, will not assist the securing of that objective.

Undoubtedly, the LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] recent attacks on Muslim villages is what led to Mr. Ashraff's proposal. The SLMC, like many others, believes that any let up in the military pressure that has been mounted against the Tigers would be counter-productive. That is why its leader said, in a statement we ran on Tuesday, that negotiations with the LTTE could demoralise the security forces and make the Muslims "a soft target for the fascist and racist LTTE."

Ending the civil war which has cost this country so much in blood and treasure must remain at the top of the national agenda. There is no debate about that reality although various people and sections may have their own thoughts on how this could be done. There are those who favour a military solution and others who believe that we are locked into a "no win" situation for either side.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa has at all times kept the door open for peace negotiations and at present, the hopes of well meaning people—whatever their political allegiance—rests with the parliamentary select committee chaired by Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe. There have been various bilateral political contacts as well, but it is fairly clear that the multilateral approach via the select committee will best serve the interests of the country.

The LTTE has, time and again, made approaches through various lobbies seeking mediation by foreign countries. Some kites have been flown in the United Nations too and the Indian factor brought in. Direct negotiations with Colombo, as represented by the select committee, would be the best way of getting any kind of fruitful discussions going but, as Justice Minister Shahul Hameed said in a recent speech, if the LTTE is keen on a political solution, then it must demonstrate that by its "attitude and actions."

That is exactly what the LTTE has not done. Minister Hameed, a moderate who has wide experience in negotiations with the LTTE in the past, is convinced that what the Tigers are now trying to do is to drive the non-Tamils out of the north and the east to make those areas what he called a "mono-ethnic region".

Mr. Ashraff and his SLMC have been having a dialogue with the Tamil parties on the subject of Muslim-Tamil relations. Parties like the UNP [United National Party] and SLFP [Sri Lanka Freedom Party] which also command the support of considerable numbers of Muslims as well as many Tamils have a good feel of what the Muslims think about Tiger attacks on both Muslims and Sinhalese in areas the LTTE claims to be the Tamil homeland.

The LTTE has time and again made overtures to the Muslims and tried to win their support. At other times it attacks helpless Muslim villagers in much the same way it massacres innocent Sinhalese in border villages. In his prize day speech at a Muslim school at Galhinna, in the Kandy district last Sunday, Mr. Hameed said that the Muslims realised that they lived in a plural society necessitating both give and take and live and let live.

But he made very clear that the ethnicity of the Muslims was not negotiable and the LTTE could not get the Muslims where the Tigers wanted by terror tactics. The minister said that if the LTTE recognised that the Muslims were an integral part of the ethnic fabric of the north and east with every right to live in those areas as the Tigers sometimes would have the Muslims believe, the attacks on the Muslims as well as innocent Sinhalese and Tamils must stop forthwith.

The LTTE will, no doubt, digest every word that is being said by various leaders in mapping out its strategy. The Tigers, like the rest of the country, will know that there will be no Jihad Regiment in the army, whoever asks for one, although a more realistic ethnic balance in the security forces will be willingly granted. Already various Tamil groups are fighting the LTTE with the forces and just yesterday the navy commended the EPDP's [Eelam People's Democratic Party] role in the islands around Kayts.

The Tigers must understand that they cannot get what they want by sheer terror. They cannot have a monopoly of power in the north and east to the exclusion of other Tamil groups and, indeed, the Sinhalese and Muslims who together outnumber the Tamils in the eastern province. If the people of the north and east choose the LTTE to run their affairs at free and fair elections, nobody could or would interfere with that mandate. If the Tigers are as confident about the support of their people as they claim to be, why do they stick to their guns?

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