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Near East & South Asia

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ALGERIA

Developments in Domestic Press Reviewed

National Newspapers

91AA0064A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
27 Sep 90 pp 9-10

[Article by Baya Gacema]

[Text] The French-language daily EL-ATWATAN has just published its inaugural issue. LE SOIR D'ALGERIE's first appeared last May. EL-KHABAR, an Arab-language daily, published its inaugural issue last June. Not to mention the SOIR D'ALGERIE and LE NOUVEL HEBDO, which have recently begun to appear regularly, with others waiting to see the light of day. And there are many of them. At this time, some thirty proposals have been submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Some 15 of them are beginning to take a semblance of form. Because publishing an inaugural issue does not mean that the business has succeeded. Everyone who has committed himself to "the intellectual adventure" agrees in recognizing that success in this business requires working on a virtual battleground.

First there was the Prime Minister's circular of April 1989, inviting journalists to choose among three options: remain with the public press, rejoin the political party organs, or attempt "the intellectual adventure" by creating their own newspapers. For those journalists frustrated by 28 years of institutionalized censorship, it was tempting to choose this third path.

The first collective formed was that of EL-WATAN. Some 40 journalists from EL-MOUDJAHID decided to undertake efforts toward creating an independent newspaper. Accused all around of being the "destroyers of the public press," they naturally have not benefited from any advantages. Several crises have shaken the collective, which now has a staff of 20 people. Omar Belhouchet, head of the enterprise, explains, "We were a cohesive body, but there were some who wanted to destabilize us because certain groups were against the emergence of an independent press. It is true that we ourselves had maintained the point of view that it is unhealthy to be without a public press. But when we say public press, we mean a press in the public service." The nuance is still under debate. It is true that events have moved rapidly and that the death of the Algerian Journalists Movement (MJA) has left the debate in suspense. The former EL-MOUDJAHID journalists, presented with a fait accompli, had no other choice than that solution, if they did not want to be transferred, along with their old newspaper, over to the control of the FLN [National Liberation Front]. Meanwhile, EL-WATAN has had difficulties from the beginning. The first issue will come out as soon as the photocomposition equipment has been installed.

In addition to the legal-administrative restrictions, it was necessary to resolve the financial problems. Contrary to

persistent rumor, they have not benefited from any subsidies. "And in any case, we would not want any if we wanted to maintain our independence," says chief editor Ali Bahmane. "The negotiations with the banks have been rough and we had to review them three times to finally obtain a short-term loan at 13 percent." This loan will finance rental of the photocomposition equipment, the APS and AFP lines, etc. The telephone installation was financed by their own resources. Regarding location, they were assigned 150 square meters (that is one of the administrative aberrations, which gives the same area to every newspaper regardless of the number of people comprising its staff.) In addition, EL-WATAN was the last to be served. Hence the delay in its appearance. The company that the Ministry of Social Affairs assigned to repair the sites has not yet finished its work, after two months. The journalists are working in such a chaotic environment that at a certain point some of them decided to quit.

That is not the case of the SOIR D'ALGERIE, which has the best location. And for good reason: it was the first to be served. It was thus able to chose the cleanest and best situated offices. A dozen rented computers are already operational and the APS, AFP and AP lines chatter nonstop. That does not mean that everything has been easy for the SOIR D'ALGERIE staff. According to the newspaper's head, Mr. Zoubir Souissi, "when the public officials allowed creation of the newspapers, it was possible to have two attitudes: either wait for them to do everything for us, or else help ourselves and take the risks." The five founding members decided to act. Today the staff is comprised of 18 people. Each of them put 10 million centimes into the pot. But that is not enough. To obtain a medium-term line of credit of 500 million centimes at 15- percent interest from the bank (CPA) [Algerian People's Credit], they mortgaged their salaries until 1992, which has added to the rolling line of credit.

The bank has in any case granted them the equipment credit in funds that will allow them to later replace the rented equipment with purchased equipment. "The bureaucracy has been the greatest constraint," says Zoubir Souissi. "When one is not accustomed to these problems, one does not realize. To obtain a trade permit, it is very demanding. It is necessary to make the same trip several times. Only the PTT [Post, Telephone, Telegraph] reacted very quickly. But we are still awaiting standard mail delivery, telefax, and telex because they are not available in the marketplace."

Then there are the printing problems. In order to get out issue 1, it was necessary to delay the date of its appearance three times. Planned for 18 August, it was postponed until 1 September and will not finally be published until 3 September. The Ech-Chaab company, responsible for the printing, was not ready. Likewise, the print run had to be revised down (from 50,000 to 35,000 copies) because of the shortage of paper. And this is another aberration on the part of the administration that authorizes increases in paper imports. The CPA refuses

to unblock credits set aside for that purpose. For distribution, the SOIR D'ALGERIE prefers to call upon the services of a private distributor who not only provides them with sales status on a daily basis, but also pays out the profits every 15 days. L'ENAMEP (which all newspapers complain about) pays only every six months.

As with the independent dailies, "EL-KHABAR intends within six months to be the premier Arab-language daily in the Maghreb." PDG [President-Chief Executive?] Abed Charef has no lack of ambition. Nor does he lack ideas. He has the same intention of revolutionizing the Arab-language press. "It is important," he says, "to introduce Cartesian journalism to it. Because Arabic in Algeria has not yet found a journalistic style. It is necessary to create a school of Arab journalism." An entire program! And to realize this, he wants to devote all his resources. Beginning with a complete move to another location. For the moment, repair works have not even begun. And the staff is working without telephones or equipment of any kind.

The staff, that is, 26 people, of which 20 are journalists, almost all of them from EL-MASSA, is built around an "anti-conformist core," as Charef says, "motivated by peer pressure." In investing their own money, they have created a private corporation in which all members own equal shares. The rest will come from the banks which, as with the other newspapers, charge prohibitive rates. "Above all, we do not want subsidies. We need to break away from that mentality."

"We prefer that the state play its part by acting on the budget and on the prices of printing and distribution equipment. By economizing in these areas, we gain more than subsidies could ever give us."

EL-KHABAR's current problem is its lack of photocomposition equipment, which is not available in Arabic. At first, the equipment will be rented through the Astein company, which has ordered it specifically for that daily. Later, editing will be completely computerized. In order for that to occur, a significant number of workstations will be required. "If necessary, we will purchase the computers on the black market, and be ready to increase the price of the newspaper," says Charef, who has already benefited, along with his staff, from a training course at ENSI [expansion not given]. In the meantime, they will make do with pen and white paper.

The ALGER-REPUBLICAIN is a case apart. The oldest among the old, with a half-century of existence, it suffers the same constraints as the new ones, since it is appearing only after 25 years of interruption. Located (very poorly) with the other independent papers on Place 1 Mai, "it suffers, like the others, from technical and financial problems," says director Mr. Benzine. After the November 1989 appearance of its inaugural issue, it has come out with others (nine in French and nine in Arabic) thanks to the support of the Association of Friends of the ALGER-REPUBLICAIN, and the sympathy movement that it has engendered. But sympathy has its limits. And

not being able to continue to be "the daily that comes out only when it can," it ceased publishing in July. It plans to publish the beginning of October if "we are able to overcome the associated problems," says Mr. Benzine.

Lacking the photocomposition equipment, it is impossible for the ALGER-REPUBLICAIN's staff to correct errors at the last minute. However, it is very important for the newspaper to be able to work with the text at every moment. Because unlike the newer journals, it wants to be an opinion paper. "Therefore, if the state gave us only those goods that had been arbitrarily seized, that would suffice for us," says Mr. Benzine. The outcome is still pending.

Among the new newspapers, LE NOVEL HEBDO is the only weekly to appear, and it is also the only one to be financed by a single person, Abdelkader Soufi, son of Tahar, owner of the Iracime company (adhesive tape). His chief editor, Abderrahmane Mahmoudi, discloses these specifics "so as to avoid rumors." The formula is simple: 50/50. "50 percent of the capital is provided by Soufi in the form of cash, and 50 percent is comprised of the know-how and work of Kamel Belkacem, in charge of the publication." Even the site where the newspaper is located belongs to Tahar Soufi. "No one wanted to give us a site, or else they proposed unsavory deals to us because according to the administration we fall under Article 18 of the Media Code, which says that financial organizations cannot publish independent journals."

In any case, the 90,000 copies he currently prints are easily sold. "We have between 0.3 and 0.5 percent unsold." And by October, it will reach 120,000 copies. He even has plans to acquire his own printer, "to be freer. Because we have printing problems like the others. Ech-Chaab has refused to deal with us, without giving us a valid reason."

And if these journalists are well paid, "that is because of the workload demanded of them. Some contribute to up to five editions per week." And what is more, that is only for the transferees. New reporters are paid like their colleagues in the public press.

Whether they are rich or poor, they all have at least one common problem: that of printing resources. And they all pose it in the same terms. In their view, it is the essential condition for the expression of democracy. It is impossible, in effect, to have freedom of speech as long as the printers hold a virtual monopoly on the organs of the press.

Features Press Agency

91AA0064B Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
27 Sep 90 p 9

[Article by Baya Gacema]

[Text] Launching a features agency. That is an original idea, and it is the idea of Selhani, an APS veteran.

This type of agency exists in some form throughout the world...but not in Algeria. It is nothing more than an information agency specializing in issues of society, sports, science, technology, and culture. "Not too much in politics," says Selhani. "In effect, it deals with the items other papers will not deal with."

The agency will operate with a minimum of journalists, but will solicit the assistance of specialized collaborators, and will utilize the telefax machine as its only piece of equipment. The investment, then, will at first be very small.

Later, the agency could extend itself to photographic services and would publish a review of the press aimed at foreigners, especially the embassies.

It will not operate except with its own resources (journals, collectives, individuals). Beginning in October, its first bulletin will see the light of day. We'll see.

Party Organs

91AA0064C Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
27 Sep 90 p 10

[Article by Baya Gacema]

[Text] As with the others, the party newspapers are facing problems imposed by our socio-political environment.

Apart from technical constraints, they all suffer the same handicap: a lack of money, even if they are financed by their party, which shelters them from banking and other negotiations.

Even EL-MOUNKID, the FIS [Islamic Front for Salvation] central organ, complains: "I do not understand why they say we are rich," says editor in chief (and Madjliss Echours member) Mr. Maarich: "Our paper is self-financing. And since it sells well, we are able to find an equilibrium." With a bimonthly print run of 240,000 copies, it plans to become a weekly at the beginning of October. The lack of space and photocomposition equipment are the main obstacles. Staff skills are also at a premium. All the reporters are youths fresh out of the university. But they make do. Faith makes up for lack of professionalism.

That is not the case with SAOUT ECH-CHAAB (the PAGS [Socialist Vanguard Party] central organ), which itself essentially employs only professional journalists. Its problems are primarily of a financial nature, the party's subsidies not being very consistent.

SAOUT EL-CHAAB also has its own tradition. It has existed since 1966, and even when printed under clandestine conditions in the form of mimeographed bulletins, it was able to benefit from the PAGS' rise to legitimacy, particularly domestically, to develop a genuine network of informers. "We have a press agency at our disposal," says Mr. Zenine, its director.

But to progress from a bulletin printed by militants to a true newspaper is not an easy thing. The editing staff is obligated to do everything to reduce expenses. Not to mention that the same print run is in two versions, Arabic and French.

With the print run reduced to 60,000 copies, it also suffers from its irregular appearances. As a monthly, it is obligated to sacrifice much material that risks being out-of-date by the time it appears. It is for that reason that it envisions becoming a weekly, before perhaps eventually becoming a daily.

LIBRE-ALGERIE, the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces] party organ in French, has ceased to appear, because the editing staff was too independent of the party line. In awaiting its reappearance, the FFS has printed two issues, one in Arabic, the other in Amazigh.

In the view of AMAINOUT editor in chief Mr. Boudjou Nacer, the Amazigh version "is the beginning of the realization of a dream: to produce a newspaper in Amazigh. Even if it is very difficult to write a political article, for example, because of linguistic limitations." But the demand is so strong!...they have been able to sell 20,000 copies in the Berber-speaking regions alone. A bit more than ASALOU, the Berber organ of the RCD [Gathering for Culture and Democracy], which produced 15,000 copies.

On the other hand, L'AVENIR, the French RCD organ, itself has reached 100,000 copies, "and demand is constantly increasing," according to editor in chief Ahmed Bouamar. So much so that he has increased his print run by 20,000 copies per issue, and will soon be printing bimonthly.

But L'AVENIR has other ambitions: "to be completely independent of the Party and become the vehicle for center-left values."

EGYPT

Candidates From Opposition Parties Run as Independents

91P40030A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic
2 Nov 90 p 1

[Text] The day before yesterday, Wednesday, when the clock struck 5 PM, was the deadline for accepting candidate applications for membership in the People's Assembly. The number of those who applied jumped to 3,032, among whom were only 10 women.

Though the first day of accepting applications took first place in the number of applicants, 851, the last day took second place when 611 candidates submitted their applications. Among the candidates, 11 withdrew since withdrawals are accepted until 19 November. During that period, a [withdrawing] candidate has the right to

recover his deposit of 200 Egyptian pounds. After that date, ballots containing the candidates' numbers, names, and symbols are printed.

In a careful review by AL-AHRAM correspondant Hasan Abu-al-'Aynayn of the lists of candidates for the People's Assembly, there were several important facts. Among them is the fact that although the National Democratic Party [NDP] nominated 444 of its members to enter the election battle—in that it stands behind them and supports them—789 NDP members applied as independents, i.e., about double the number nominated by the party. This means, in the opinion of election experts, that the votes of the constituents supporting the NDP will be fragmented and scattered between those nominated by the party and those who applied as independents. This will definitely lead to a repetition of the election in more than 80 percent of the election precincts.

The review also noted that 1,511 independents who do not belong to any political party have nominated themselves to enter the battle.

As for the opposition parties, or the "boycotting" parties which announced that they were boycotting the elections—the Wafd Party, the Socialist Labor Party [SLP], and the Liberal Party—186 of their candidates applied as independents, including 81 from the Wafd, 71 from the SLP and 34 from the Liberal Party.

Other parties that decided to enter the election battle along with the NDP, include the National Progressive Unionist Grouping Party, the Ummah Party, Young Egypt Party [Misr al-Fatah], the Green Party, and the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP]. These parties have 100 candidates: 52 from NPUG, 22 from the Ummah Party, and the rest, 26, distributed among the Young Egypt Party, the Greens and the DUP.

The NDP only nominated four women, but six women nominated themselves from all the election precincts as independents and members of the other parties. The total number of female candidates is now 10 in the precincts of Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia, and Port Sa'id, after one withdrew in al-Sharqiyah.

The largest number of candidates [in one precinct] was in the second precinct in al-Jizah, which was 30. The smallest number of candidates was two in the fourth precinct in Bani Suwayf, one of them a laborer and the other a professional [usually white collar; since the time of 'Abd-al-Nasir, the law specifies that 50 percent of People's Assembly members should represent laborers and farmers and 50 percent other professions]. This does not mean that they win unopposed. Elections will be conducted and to win, each of them must obtain [at least] 10 percent of the registered votes in the precinct lists. [These two are] Judge Sa'd Bahnasawi, secretary general of the NDP in Bani Suwayf representing the professions and Muhammad Fahim 'Uthman representing laborers.

[Two others] from the Abshway precinct in al-Fayyum withdrew their candidacy for the People's Assembly: 'Ali Mahmud al-Jarhi, a farmer, and Salih 'Abd-al-Fattah Ghayth, a professional, in order to limit the list to Dr. Yusuf Wali and 'Isa Ghaydan.

IRAQ

'Secret Weapon' Reportedly in Military Arsenal

90AE0346A London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic
5 Sep 90 p 1

[Article by Basim Sakkijha: "Iraqi Secret Weapon Turns Aircraft Carriers Into 'Floating Coffins'"]

[Text] A Jordanian military analyst said Iraq possesses deterrent weapons other than those it has disclosed so far and will use them should it become the target of a major military strike.

The military analyst, who declined to give his name, told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that apart from the talk about Baghdad being in possession of certain types of nuclear weapons, something of which nobody can be certain that they exist, Iraq possesses oil that could be a major deterring weapon that is in no way less than the other strategic weapons.

The analyst stressed that the Iraqis have a plan which they studied and which they are ready to implement in case it is necessary. The plan calls for pumping millions of barrels of oil in the Gulf both from Iraq and Kuwait. This would lead to:

- Navigation in the Arab Gulf for ordinary ships and even battleships coming to a halt and aircraft carrier movement being reduced by 70 percent.
- The destruction of water desalination plants, which would make thirst a life problem in the Gulf countries and would lead to stoppage of work in many factories on the Gulf coast.
- Setting fire to these vast quantities of oil if they are pumped into the waters in two stages separated by a certain period of time.

Explaining this, the analyst said that the first quantity would float on the surface and after some time it would harden, becoming a solid matter. This would enable pumping another quantity of oil on top and igniting it.

Cleaning the waters from oil will require a long period of time, perhaps years. He noted in this regard the oil spill in Alaska where cleaning 150,000 barrels took about three years.

As to how far the Iraqis would suffer from this, he said the strength of the water flow from the Shatt al-'Arab would push the great quantities of oil toward the south in the direction of the Gulf's southeastern coast and away from the Iraqi and Kuwaiti coasts.

With regard to Iran, the analyst said that not a single drop will touch the Iranian coasts because the longitude

and latitude lines and the high and low tide are confined to the Arab coasts and because the Gulf is parallel to the longitude lines, which makes it impossible for the oil to move away from the middle of the Gulf longitudinally.

This, he added, is a strategic option which Iraq has not disclosed yet, but which it keeps as a last resort in case the United States and its allies resorted to mass destruction weapons and if war, should it break out, reaches a critical point.

Recalling what Iraqi President Saddam Husayn said on several occasions, that "he will burn the Gulf if Iraq is attacked", the Jordanian analyst said that he probably meant resorting to this option.

The analyst said that Iraq possesses a Soviet missile with a 400-km range specially for the destruction of aircraft carriers. The Soviet strategy, he added, always said that "aircraft carriers are no more than floating coffins." It appears that this might come true in the Arab Gulf! In any case, the military analyst precludes the outbreak of war because the options that have become available [to the sides] would result in oil exports stopping for many years. Finally, he wonders whether the fleets that have come to defend the oil will fight while realizing that this could mean the stoppage of 55 percent of world oil exports.

JORDAN

Al-Majali Denounces American Goals in Gulf

90AE0365B Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
10 Sep 90 p 3

[Text] Al-Karak—Retired Staff General 'Abd-al-Hadi al-Majali delivered a lecture entitled "A Political and Military View of Events in the Arab Gulf" at the Haza' Al-Majali Memorial Hall in the city of al-Karak at the invitation of the al-Karak Cultural and Athletic Club.

In his lecture, Gen. al-Majali explained the goals of the United States in the gulf region, indicating that they are economic, inasmuch as conflict in the 1990s will be economic, not military.

He stated that the conflict will center on three economic axes that will compete with each other. One axis comprises Japan and the Southeast Asian countries, another comprises united Europe, including the Soviet Union and united Germany, and a third comprises the two Americas. Hence, American strategic goals in the coming decade will focus on the United States being the premiere state politically and economically, and on its maintenance of a high standard of living for the American people and economic control over Europe and Japan. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to control the oil tap, including oil quantities, prices, and transport lines.

Gen. al-Majali stated that the Arab nation in general, and the Arab east in particular, especially Iraq and

Jordan, which make up the heart of the Arab east, have been served notice of the return of the Arab east to the status of a protectorate, tutelage, and mandate, which developed after WWI and continued until the end of the 1960s.

He added that what is occurring in the Arab Gulf region is an economic war and a war of interests for which international law is being exploited through the United Nations, for which the petty interests of some Arab countries are being exploited, and for which use is being made of the surpluses of the armies of the world (and what that entails for the world arms trade), which have found a theater for their operations and activities in the Arab Gulf region, after their role in Europe and the world waned as a result of the end of the cold war, and the Soviet Union's abandonment of its military and strategic role, which had placed it in confrontation with the West militarily and economically.

The Kuwait crisis was an opportunity for the West to end the position of power and resurgence that Iraq represents. Iraq, with its people, army, leadership, and achievements presents a challenge to fragment, weaken, exploit and plunder the Arab revolutions for which colonialism laid the foundation.

He stated that establishment of the Arab revolution through the behavior of millions of Arab people, the unleashing of the abilities of the Arab people to close the cultural gap between the Arab nation and the world, the construction of a center of Arab power able to deter Zionism and foreign ambitions, and the establishment of sound priorities for the resurgence and construction of the Arab nation—all of these factors, as expressed by the principles, goals, and policies advocated by Iraq and supported by Arab partners everywhere—make the West feel threatened.

He added that Jordan's king and people are assuming their role in this confrontation, and that Jordan is not threatened by international fleecing campaigns. Nor is its gaze diverted by the bribes and doubtful enticements that are buying disgraceful positions against Iraq with billions and with lavish promises.

Islamic Scholars on Economic Blockade of Iraq

90AE0365A Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
6 Sep 90 p 8

[Article by Tal'at Shana'ah]

[Text] Amman—What is the ruling of the canonical law of Islam regarding a Muslim who joins with foreign states that are allied with the Jews to occupy Muslim countries, and that became known for their hostility toward Islam in their effort to starve out a Muslim people?

What obligations does Islam impose on a Muslim in this case? Should a Muslim adhere to the position of his government if that government has chosen to participate in a starvation operation?

AL-DUSTUR posed these questions to a number of ulema, who responded as follows:

Deputy Shaykh 'Abd-al-Mun'im Abu-Zant

Allying with foreign countries that are allied with the Jews to occupy and starve out a Muslim country is considered forbidden from two standpoints:

First: Because it is considered an alliance with Jewish disbelief, which is fighting against Islam and the Muslims.

Second: Because it results in the starving of a Muslim people.

Regarding the first point, God the sublime states: "God only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong" [Koran, 60:9].

The sublime also states: "Amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them" [Koran 5:51] and "Nor doth God give guidance to a people unjust" [Koran 2:258]. "Those in whose hearts is a disease—thou seest how eagerly they run about amongst them, saying: 'We do fear lest a change of fortune bring us disaster.' Ah! perhaps God will give (thee) victory, or a decision according to His will. Then will they repent of the thoughts which they secretly harboured in their hearts" [Koran 5:52]. As for the second point regarding the starvation of a Muslim people, the prophet, God grant him salvation, said:

"If there is a hungry Muslim among the inhabitants of a courtyard of a quarter, they shall fulfill God's obligation toward him."

In another Hadith [narrative relating the deeds and utterances of the prophet and his companions], he states: "Whoever becomes sated while his neighbor is hungry shall fulfill God's obligation."

The sublime says: "Do not fight each other." Accordingly, the starvation of a Muslim is considered tantamount to killing him from a psychological and human standpoint.

If it is required to respect the humanity of a disbelieving prisoner and not to deny him food, clothing, and medicine in execution of the sublime's judgement, by following His great wisdom—"And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive,—" [Koran 76:81] we are all the more required to provide food to a hungry Arab, Muslim!

Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khayyat

I want to say here that I am not rendering a formal legal opinion. I was asked several questions regarding the current situation, and my response is as follows:

First: Regarding an Arab's blockade of his brother Arab, and a Muslim's blockade of his brother Muslim, the purport of which is starving an entire people and depriving it of food and vital material, in my opinion, from a legal standpoint, it is not permitted. A Muslim must not abandon his brother in a time of adversity. Rather, he must be with him and must not respond to the call of enemies nor accept the boycott and blockading of his brother, as the prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He shall neither abandon, despise, oppress, nor surrender him." Then, the prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "God does not safeguard, God does not safeguard one who has become sated while his neighbor is hungry, and he knows [of his neighbor's hunger." In addition, an Arab Muslim is required to relieve the distress of his brother, support him, and prefer him over himself. Therefore, I believe, from a legal standpoint, that the call to cut off any Arab people by starving it and denying it food is not permitted, because it implies the starving of an entire people, including men, women, children, the sick, and the needy.

As for asking the help of enemies, it is not permitted to ask their help against a Muslim fighting his Muslim brother, as the prophet, God bless and grant him salvation, said: "Do not seek illumination in the fire of the idolaters"; and as God the sublime said: Whoever befriends them is one of them."

As for whether or not it is permitted to detain foreign subjects in the event of aggression and war, or foreign subjects whose governments have crossed the border and have concentrated their troops for a war against an Arab, Muslim country, from a legal standpoint, I have found, upon reviewing the texts in this regard, support for such detention to prevent the harming of Muslims and for self-defense purposes, without harming the lives or property of the detainees, which must be preserved from as legal standpoint, as stated in books of thought. Those who support this view relied on the sublime's statement: "Reprisal is sacrosanct. Whoever attacks you, attack him as he attacked you. Obey God and know that God is with the God-fearing."

It is known that the states hostile to Iraq have detained foreign subjects on past occasions.

Support is found for this in the detainment by the prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, in the al-Hudaybah war, which ended in peace, of Mukarriz Ibn-Hafs with five men. Also, when the prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, decided to conquer revered Mecca, he prevented anyone from leaving the enlightened city unless they obtained his permission."

The prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, on the day of the conquest of Mecca, confined Abu-Sufyan, Harb Ibn-Umayyah, Hakim Ibn-Hazzam, and Badil Ibn-Waraqah, until the armies entered Mecca.

As for whether a mufti [official expounder of Islamic law] or a shari'ah [Islamic canonical law] judge are permitted to render a legal judgement so as to suit a ruler, we maintain that they are not permitted to render a formal legal judgement so as to suit the caprice of a ruler. Rather, the judgement must be compatible with the truth and the canonical law of Islam, as the prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "The created has no obedience in disobeying the creator," and "do not follow caprice, because it will cause you to stray from the path of God," and the sublime's statement: "If the truth obeyed their whims, the earth and heavens and those in them would become corrupt. We have given them their Koran, and they shun their Koran."

Finally, I want to say that if a solution is necessary, let the Arabs and Muslims solve their problem without allowing others to intervene in it, especially inasmuch as oil is the Muslims' wealth in general, and we all know why the forces of the West have concentrated everything they have on this problem and have forgotten the blood that is flowing on the land of Palestine, the bones that are being broken, the innocent that are being imprisoned, the deportees, the starvation from which they are suffering, and the seized al-Aqsa Mosque. It is more worthwhile for the assemblies of the nations to support the truth against the falsehood of Israel.

Shaykh Mutlaq al-Muhtasib, Retired Islamic Canonical Law Judge, Preacher of the Mosque of the Scientific, Islamic College

God the sublime says: Oh believers, do not join the retinue of others who are constantly trying to throw you into disorder. You have always met with hardship. The hatred from their mouths has become obvious, and what their hearts conceal is greater. The verses have made it clear for you if you are endowed with reason. Are you friends who love them and they do not love you? They do not believe in the entire Koran. If they meet you, they say we believe, and if they are alone, they seize you with fingertips of wrath. Say die in your wrath. God knows what is inside the heart.

Islam has defined the relation of the Muslim with his Muslim brother, the relation of the Muslim with the people of the book [monotheists with a holy writ (Jews and Christians)] who enter into a pact with the Muslims and into their protection, and the relation of the Muslim and the Islamic state with idolaters, disbelievers, and Christian and Jewish people of the book who have declared their hostility and enmity to, and war against, the nation of Muslims and Arabs and have striven to occupy their regions and their countries and to seize their resources. Islam made clear that the relation and the connection that binds the Muslim and his Muslim brother is based on faith and Islam, not nationality or

citizenship. It made clear that if the people of the book enter into a pact with, and the protection of, Muslims they have the same rights and obligations as Muslims. Acting aggressively against them, seizing their property, or denying them their rights are not permitted. Regarding the relation of the Muslim, the single united Islamic state, and the currently existing Arab and Islamic states, Islam prohibits Muslims, Arab states, and Islamic states from cooperating with disbelievers, idolaters, the enemies of Islam and Muslims, be they the people of the book from western states or from eastern states, and with Muslim hypocrites and heretics.

Therefore, Islam prohibited friendship with enemies, cooperation with them, and the conclusion of military, economic and political pacts and treaties with their various governments, creeds, and parties. It prohibited Muslims from giving them political, economic, ideological, informational, financial, or military aid. It also prohibited Muslims from working at their military camps and their civil, military, and industrial installations. It is not permitted for Muslims or Arab or Islamic states to provide Islam's enemies with any material or psychological aid that enables foreign governments that are enemies of the Muslims to remain in the territories, countries, and areas of Muslims, or to seize their resources, or to conclude military pacts with them.

Neither are Muslims allowed to divulge the secrets of the Islamic nation to the enemies of the Muslims. Muslims and Arab or Islamic states are not permitted to throw themselves into the embrace of enemies, merge with them, permit them to land in the Muslim territories, countries, or areas, or to interfere in their regions.

Muslims or Arab states are not permitted to request aid from the enemies of Islam and Muslims to achieve their personal interests or a desired special benefit or transitory object, even if relations between Muslims or between Arab or Islamic states deteriorate, or a conflict or discord occurs between them.

It is not permitted to seek the aid of the enemies of Islam and Muslims to take over any Arab or Islamic state. Nor is it permitted to adhere to a resolution of the United Nations Organization that includes the imposition of an economic blockade on fraternal Iraq, the starvation of the fraternal Iraqis, or the infliction of any punishment on them be it military, political, economic, or financial.

Whoever risks that is considered a friend of such enemies.

Arabs and Muslims must not adhere to any United Nations resolution that inflicts damage or hurt on Muslims, or that enables the enemies of Muslims to take over the regions, countries, and property of Muslims.

Prominent Personalities Discuss War, Peace in Gulf

90AE0365C Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
10 Sep 90 p 4

[Article by Malik al-Tall]

[Text] Given the speed of events in the region, the heat of which surpasses that of any international crisis since the Vietnam War, observers are posing an important question that occupies the minds of the entire world:

Has the specter of war moved away from the region, especially given the intensification of political efforts worldwide to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, and the growing number of proponents of a peaceful solution? Or is the region moving toward a destructive war launched by American forces to impose their control over the oil resources and to dismember Iraq's military machine, which has become a great force that threatens American imperialist interests in the region?

AL-DUSTUR posed this question to a number of military people, parliamentary deputies, politicians, and prominent personalities.

Prominent Personality Amin Shaqir

Amin Shaqir stated: It does not appear that the specter of war has gone away. We hope that the world conscience has understood and realized that the Arab nation rejects injury and cannot accept it. The international political scales are continuing to tilt toward the forceful subjugation of the Arab nation.

The Arab nation has the right to confront aggression and to wring its freedom from the hands of its enemies, who are mankind's enemies.

Prominent Personality Abu-Nawwar

It is difficult for one to assert that the specter of war has gone away. However, there are indications that international intervention is returning America and its allies to their right mind, so that they follow a peaceful course, inasmuch as international elements concerned with the confrontation are stressing that a war would not be glorious for either the invaders or the countries of the region on whose land or in whose waters foreign forces are present.

Deputy Layth Shubaylat

Deputy Layth Shubaylat stated: I do not believe that the specter of war has gone away. The decision to go to war was made long ago, because there is a desire to destroy Iraqi power and to prevent any power in the Third World, especially the Islamic world, from acquiring strategic weapons and joining the major powers club. It has become desirable to distance Iraq from the major powers club. I do not believe that people will be satisfied

to see their governments joining the ranks of Israel and America, both of which are striking Arab and Islamic forces in the region.

Deputy Husni al-Shayyab

Deputy Husni al-Shayyab stated: It is difficult for one to be certain about whether or not a war will occur. I believe that there is enough time to emerge with a peaceful solution. Current Arab and international peace-making efforts stress a peaceful solution and the easing of the escalation in the gulf region. The Soviet Union's recent call, its opposition to a military solution, and the expected undertaking of the American-Soviet conference—all of these factors highlight the Soviet call for a peaceful solution. Also, the Chinese position calls for a peaceful solution in an Arab framework.

Najib al-Mumini

Major General (retired) Najib al-Mumini, stated: The specter of war will not go away unless the Arab mind recovers its reason, and it becomes possible to achieve reconciliation between the Arab leaders. This is a basic condition for denying the westerners their current base in the region. The enormous military mobilization in the gulf began with an intensive psychological war through the media, in an attempt to exert psychological pressure on Iraq. Iraqi determination is unswerving Arab determination to achieve its goal. In view of Iraqi and Western determination, the situation in the gulf is a powder keg that might explode due to a reckless spark at any moment. The two forces are confronting each other in a single region. They both pose a threat to each other. However, no one can know how a war might begin.

'Abdallah Zurayqat

Major General (retired) 'Abdallah al-Zurayqat stated: The specter of war is not near. The outbreak of a war is very unlikely at present. However, what will happen tomorrow? Will new complications arise? Will a technical or military error be made, given that the area is so tense? The hostile land forces concentrated in the Arabian Peninsula are not at a level to play an effective role against an army that exceeds 1 million and is supported by a people's army of 4 million.

In addition, the morale of the Iraqi soldier can never be matched by the morale of the American soldier, who has gone overseas to fight an enemy about whom he knows nothing.

Khalid Hajhuj al-Majali

Major General (retired) Khalid Hajhuj al-Majali stated:

I believe that the specter of war has been remote from the start. America and the Western countries fear that the situation will develop and that Iraq will gain control of the richest source of oil in the world. Therefore, America and its allies secured the oil in Saudi Arabia and placed it under their control.

I do not believe that a decision to go to war is in the offing. America's lack of a desire for a military clash is confirmed by its internationalization of the crisis politically and militarily.

Muhammad Hanun

Staff Brigadier General (retired) Muhammad Samih Hanun stated:

If war breaks out, there will be many casualties. The Americans are convinced of the need to seek the best solution possible that is far from the military option. However, the Zionist lobby is behind the decision-making process, pushing for a military solution, so that Iraqi military power is dealt a blow, despite the advice given by the military leadership to President Bush not to resort to force because of the enormous losses that would result from a military offensive. The question here is: Does America control its decisionmaking process? What will be its decision? Will it make a military or a diplomatic decision? They are now reshuffling their cards. One who concentrates his forces does not necessarily intend to fight. It might be psychological pressure to move toward a political decision and away from a military decision.

KUWAIT

Al-Sabah Arms Connection With Khashuqji, Israel Alleged

91AE0012A Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic
14 Sep 90 p 2

[Article: "Expressing Its Willingness To Pay Costs, Sabah Family Incites 'Israel' Against Iraq"]

[Text] New York—AL-QADISIYAH Exclusive—A source close to 'Adnan Khashuqji, an international millionaire and well-known arms dealer, has said that in a special meeting held at a narrow level during his visit to the United States a week ago, Sabah Jabir Ahmad complained about the passage of time which is costing him and his expelled family vast sums of money without any noteworthy return. He also stressed that his firm relationship with Khashuqji permits him to confide in him on this issue that is worrying the entire Sabah family. All the family members have become worried since hearing discouraging reports and positions from some countries which were relied upon to contribute to paying a certain percentage of the cost and expenditures of the U.S. and western troop concentration in the Arab Gulf.

The source added that Sabah Jabir spoke as a "powerless man" and asked 'Adnan Khashuqji to exploit his relationship with "Israel" to urge the Zionist entity state to take firmer positions against Iraq, considering that Israel is a "strong deterrent country that possesses numerous weapons of mass destruction and that can stop Baghdad in its tracks," according to Jabir.

But Khashuqji, who is facing legal difficulties in the United States and in some European countries, was cautious at the meeting and requested maximum confidentiality in connection with Sabah Jabir's demands which would provoke numerous problems in the Arab homeland if exposed. Khashuqji pledged to hold contacts with parties close to Tel Aviv in order to convey Jabir's viewpoint.

The source close to Khashuqji has asserted that Sabah Ahmad Jabir was careful not to mention his extreme concern over the possibility that the family's vast funds may be depleted before anything is done against Iraq. Jabir insinuated that the interest of some countries in the Sabah family has begun to wane with the passage of time and wondered what situation would develop if the issue is prolonged further. This means, according to the interpretation of Khashuqji's friend, that this will put the Sabah family aspirations and demands at the bottom of the interests of even those who are closest to the family, such as the Sa'ud family which is experiencing problems currently, especially since the two families had previously fought each other over interests and spoils. The same goes for the United States whose president constantly reminds us that he is constitutionally responsible for the U.S. citizens' lives. This has angered the Sabah family which interprets this U.S. signal as the lack of immediate and prompt willingness to carry out family demands and objectives which are hostile to Iraq.

MOROCCO

Government Signs Oil Exploration Accord With Petro-Canada

91P40032A Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 19 Oct 90 pp 12, 13

[Report by Marcel Herzog]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Morocco has small quantities of oil, principally located in Gharb and the Essaouira basin. Exploration undertaken by the Bureau of Mining Research and Participation, international companies and the National Agency for Petroleum Research and Production [ONAREP] has not yielded significant results. It should also be noted that exploration has not been done on a large enough scale because, first and foremost, it is very expensive and, second, the state-run organizations have neither the financial nor material resources needed. Therefore it has become necessary to arrange accords with international companies whose willingness is obviously a function of the profitability of the operations they are led to undertake. [passage omitted]

Canada has created an organization of international cooperation, the Petro-Canada Corporation for International Assistance (CPCAI), a subsidiary of Petro-Canada.

Our Canadian partners knew that Morocco had been producing small quantities of oil since the 1920's and that the country had not benefited from the increase in oil exploration of the 1970's. Some 10 years ago the Canadian Government made every effort to foster North-South cooperation in the area of oil exploration and had even proposed the creation of an energy subsidiary of the World Bank. These initiatives were not successful. To underscore its interest in these proposals, the Canadian Government decided, unilaterally, to create its own office of energy cooperation.

Thus CPCAI was established.

The task assigned to this organization was to dedicate funds (starting with a budget of 250 million Canadian dollars) and technical methods (those of the large oil company Petro-Canada) to helping developing countries find new hydrocarbon resources.

The work envisioned—geological and geophysical studies, seismic readings and drilling—is financed by CPCAI exclusively to benefit Morocco. At the same time, CPCAI organized training and technology transfer programs either in specialized centers in Canada or at the work sites themselves. Since 1983 CPCAI has undertaken the interpretation of offshore seismic studies to uncover any interesting anomalies.

In 1985 a technical assistance project carried out by the Societe Quebecoise d'Initiatives Petrolieres (SOQUIP) at a cost of 3 million Canadian dollars and lasting two years was concluded. A team of experts worked in Morocco in close cooperation with experts from ONAREP. Their first task was to attempt restoration of most of the offshore Atlantic using all available information.

A maritime seismic study of new seismic, gravimetric, and magnetic data covering 5,000 km on the north-western coast of the country was proposed. CPCAI took responsibility for financing the program at an estimated cost of 4 million Canadian dollars. The program was to be carried out by a special Canadian ship, the Bernier, belonging to Petro-Canada and built only three years beforehand. This ship was equipped with the most advanced technical equipment, including instruments for three-dimensional seismic studies.

These studies were successfully concluded. Based on the information acquired through them, several accords have recently been signed with Petro-Canada. It is important to note that, in general, accords signed with international companies are limited in time and financing terms. CPCAI intends to operate on a long term basis, taking into account the fact that one significant discovery can require more than 10 years of sustained work. [passage omitted]

Finally, Petro-Canada recently approved a budget of 7.2 million Canadian dollars (54 million dirhams) for the

1990-91 and 1991-92 fiscal years. Three drilling explorations will be carried out in the Essaouira basin, jointly with ONAREP, in order to test the oil and gas reserves in the Essaouira basin.

SAUDI ARABIA

Soviet Minister Discusses Possible Commercial Ties

91AE0080C Jeddah ARAB NEWS in English
29 Oct 90 p 2

[Article by Aldo Svaldi]

[Text] Jeddah, 28 Oct—It is hoped that commerce will follow quickly in the footsteps of diplomacy after a 'get-acquainted' meeting of Saudi businessmen and Soviet government officials last night in Jeddah.

Soviet Foreign Trade Relations Minister Konstantin Katushev told Jeddah Chamber of Commerce officials that petroleum-related industries are the most promising areas of cooperation, according to Leonid Anikeev, manager of international finance and treasury of the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of the USSR. Anikeev translated the minister's major points for ARAB NEWS.

Anikeev said it was premature to talk about specific products, but the minister mentioned Soviet importers were interested in petroleum and chemical-related goods, as well as agricultural products. Demand should increase as the Soviet Union continues "conversion," or the process of switching military industries over to consumer and durable goods.

The minister said an investment protection law allowing the free repatriation of profits made by foreign investors was now under debate in the Soviet parliament. Anikeev said the minister welcomed joint ventures and the possibility of increased tourism for both sides.

One of the first steps to establishing trade is adjusting the ruble to the international market. Anikeev said the country is trying to adjust the rate to 1.80 rubles to \$1. The current rate, used for accounting purposes, is 60 kopeks to \$1.

Anikeev said trade between the two countries until now has been "tiny, really tiny" compared to how large the two countries are. No target levels for trade have been set yet, Anikeev said.

Beyond products and tourism, the minister mentioned that the Soviets are interested in studying how Saudi Arabia has matched its 5-year planning system with the market economy.

"The experience of Saudi Arabia might prove rather valuable for us," Anikeev said.

Anikeev said there was no significance in the timing of the visit, only that it was important to establish commercial ties as quickly as possible after the countries agreed in September to exchange ambassadors.

"Saudi and Soviet relations are strongly supported by President Mikhail Gorbachev. All of this only became possible with perestroika," Anikeev said.

Yemeni Exodus Causes 'No Major Labor Shortages'

*91AE0080A Jeddah ARAB NEWS in English
24 Oct 90 p 2*

[Article by Javid Hassan]

[Text] Riyadh, 23 Oct—The departure of Yemenis and other expatriates from Saudi Arabia has created labor shortages, especially in automotive repairs, but workers from other nations are already beginning to fill the gap.

An example is in the old Industrial Estate in Riyadh, where an estimated 40,000 Yemenis left, resulting in longer waiting periods for car repairs, higher service charges, and in some cases, wage hikes.

Mohammad Farooq, a Pakistani mechanic, said there is a critical shortage of mechanics, electricians, painters, welders and helpers.

"Now each of us has to attend to 10 or 12 cars a day instead of three to four," Farooq said.

Many Yemeni-owned garages, now closed, are being used as parking areas for vehicles to be repaired at workshops that are full.

The shortage comes at a time when greater demands are being placed on mechanics by the arrival of Kuwaitis, many with cars. Taj Hassan and Tanvir Hyder, mechanics, said 70 percent of the cars coming to their shop have been involved in accidents of some sort—a phenomena which they say never existed before the Kuwaiti influx.

"Maybe, the Kuwaitis are not familiar with the driving conditions here. But a majority of cars, including those with Kuwaiti license plates, have been badly dented in accidents," they said.

Besides labor, a shortage of spare parts has led to a 20 percent jump in their prices, Farooq said. The problem is attributed to higher shipping rates and to the relative inexperience of new owners taking over the spare parts shops from the Yemenis.

The shortages of parts and labor may only be temporary, however. In Riyadh, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Turks, and Bangladeshis appear to be replacing many of the Yemenis. More than 50 percent of the recruits are said to be from Egypt and Pakistan.

M.P. Joseph, labor commissioner and managing director of the Overseas Development Promotion Consultants of

Kerala, said his organization had over 25,000 job candidates listed in its data-bank, representing more than 125 job categories. He said discussions he had with the Ministry of Labor and with representatives of various private sector organizations revealed a big demand for skilled personnel in hospitals, factories and firms.

The Indian official, who came to Riyadh after a five-week stay in Jordan's al-Ruwaishad Camp, said 90 percent of the evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq would like to return to the Gulf.

SUDAN

Opposition Alliance Leader on Plans Against Government

*91AA0039A Paris AL-MUHARRIR in Arabic
16 Oct 90 p 4*

[Interview With General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali, Former Commander of Sudanese Armed Forces; "Sudanese Opposition Brushes Its Teeth; National Alliance Chairman: I Will Not Reveal Our Military Plan;" first Three Paragraphs Are AL-MUHARRIR introduction; date and place not given]

[Excerpts] The Sudanese opposition is active these days. In the wake of ex-President Ja'far Numayri's movements, here is General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali, the former commander of the Sudanese armed forces, moving from one Arab country to another to explain the objectives of the National Democratic Alliance. The birth of this alliance was announced by a group of high-ranking army commanders who have moved from the sphere of "confidential action" to the sphere of open action to confront Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir's regime. [passage omitted]

What does Fathi Ahmad 'Ali specifically want? What point have his contacts and efforts reached? Is he actually capable of "unsettling" Lieutenant General al-Bashir?

For the first time, 'Ali answers with utter clarity the questions concerning the now (more than ever before) open struggle for power.

[AL-MUHARRIR] In an explicit statement, you have declared a "military rebellion" against the regime of Lt Gen 'Umar al-Bashir, the 'Salvation' Council chairman. Why at this particular time?

['Ali] We have been working confidentially since 30 June 1989 when a small group toppled the legitimate government. Since then, this group has not stopped the campaigns of violence and persecution, the displacement of thousands of civilians and military, the arrest and torture of large numbers of honorable civilians, and the execution of others. Perhaps you agree with me that the current government's policy has led, among other things, to an almost complete economic collapse in all aspects of life. Moreover, the country is now living in international

isolation and standing on the threshold of real famine. Furthermore, the regime succeeded in igniting the fires of war in the south at a time when the peace process had made advanced strides. Finally, Khartoum's foreign policy has fallen into the snares of axes and polarization now that Khartoum has devoured the armed forces of their best and most patriotic elements.

All this has encouraged us to move from the confidential action phase to the sphere of open action and to declare the birth of the National Democratic Alliance, taking advantage of the climate created by the Gulf crisis which has provided us with the opportunity to reinforce the internal and external contacts now that the past, and short-lived, Arab policy of detent has retreated or collapsed.

[AL-MUHARRIR] The alliance has promised military action. How will this be?

[Ali] Do you expect me to reveal to you our military plans on the pages of AL-MUHARRIR? It is no secret to you that confidentiality is a must in this regard. However, I will assure you that we have recently approved a military-political plan whose objective is to link the internal underground action channels efficiently so as to make it possible to confront the government's "dictatorship" effectively. I believe that you will relieve me from defining the features of this plan, keeping in mind that we have consulted on it with the National Democratic Alliance leaders and with other circles with the aim of speeding up the countdown and, subsequently, restoring "legitimacy."

[AL-MUHARRIR] Where does the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement stand vis-a-vis this alliance? Are consultations held with this front also?

[Ali] All the Sudanese with their various tendencies and inclinations stand in one line against the "coupists" line. I assure you that the People's Movement is a party in the alliance. It is in the logic of things that we contact it and consult with it. What is more, there are ongoing talks to agree on ending the war in the south in the post-Bashir phase according to givens that serve peace and the country's interests and unity.

[AL-MUHARRIR] What is the armed forces' current condition now that the economic crisis has intensified? Is it true that salaries are being paid only with difficulty?

[Ali] The situation is truly sad and the proofs are numerous:

1. The capabilities that are difficult to "tame" or whose complete loyalty is doubted have been ousted.
2. Minor officers who support the regime have been granted broad powers to create a constant split with the high-ranking officers.
3. Elements whose loyalty is suspected have been transferred to the south because of lack of confidence in these elements.
4. Private militias parallel to the army have been established.
5. The popular defense law has been exploited to serve private objectives.
6. Corruption and graft have been sowed in order to facilitate the affairs of some factions at the expense of others.
7. The tyranny, suppression, and oppression inside the military establishment and outside it, of course, have been intensified.

Concluding, 'Ali said: "Proceeding from this point, we have called for a 'rebellion' to remove oppression and to establish the foundations of freedom, democracy, security, and peace."

The words are pretty. But this is "just a threat on paper." Does the "alliance" represent a real force capable of bringing about change?

Ja'far Numayri doubts it. As he has told AL-MUHARRIR in a telephone interview, he sings outside this flock. But he does not exclude any serious dialogue because "he is, by nature, open to discussion and dialogue. (Please, believe)

On their part, al-Bashir circles see that the escalating talk about growing opposition is tied to the Gulf crisis and seeks to "vex" the Salvation Council because of its position toward this crisis.

The fact remains that Fathi Ahmad 'Ali is optimistic and that he rejects the title "ex-commander" because he still considers himself the armed forces' "legitimate commander." What is your opinion, may your life be a long one?

BANGLADESH

Ershad Addresses Troops Leaving for Saudi Arabia

91AS0166A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
7 Sep 90 pp 1, 8

[Text] President H.M. Ershad last night called upon the troops of Bangladesh Army contingent leaving for Saudi Arabia to display high professional standard during their stay there, reports BSS.

Addressing a batch of Bangladesh Army on the eve of their departure for Saudi Arabia at Zia International Airport here last night, the President said the decision of the government to send military contingent to Saudi Arabia had been acclaimed all over the world. Wishing good luck to the officers and soldiers, the President advised them to maintain strict discipline while discharging their duties in the holy Saudi soil. He said Bangladesh troops would be used only for defensive purpose and help protect the holy Saudi soil places from outside aggression.

President Ershad hoped that Bangladesh Army had already earned reputation in the world and the present responsibility would give them further scope to bolster their image abroad.

Explaining Bangladesh's position in the current Middle East crisis, the President said that the principled stand of the country was to oppose aggression. Since Bangladesh opposes aggression and wants peace, we cannot but to condemn the aggression and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq, he said.

Army chief of Staff Lt. Gen. M. Noor Uddin Khan was present.

Ershad Reports on Visit to Turkey, Saudi Arabia

91AS0163A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
16 Sep 90 pp 1, 8

[Text] President H.M. Ershad returned home yesterday at the end of a four-day visit to Turkey and Saudi Arabia, reports BSS.

After a two-day state visit to Turkey, President Ershad went to Saudi Arabia where he performed umrah [minor pilgrimage] and held talks with Saudi King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud.

He was received at the Zia International Airport by Vice-President Moudud Ahmed when he arrived by a special flight of Saudia.

Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hossain, Ministers, chiefs of the three services and high civil and military officials were present.

Ershad-Fahd Talks

An earlier report from Jeddah says: The situation in the Middle East arising out of the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait came up prominently during the several rounds of discussions between visiting Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammad Ershad and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz.

President Ershad, who arrived here on Thursday from Turkey, had initial discussions, with King Fahd as the Saudi Monarch received him at the King 'Abd al-'Aziz International Airport here and accompanied the president to the new Al-Hamra Palace. President Ershad later called on the King.

The Saudi King also met President Ershad Friday night at Al-Hamra Palace where the Bangladesh leader was staying. Official sources said both the leaders continued their discussion further during the meeting which lasted for 40 minutes and was held prior to President Ershad's departure for home.

King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz also saw off the president at Al-Hamra Palace.

Crown Prince Abdullah, who is the Deputy Prime Minister, also called on President Ershad at the palace. The Crown Prince later accompanied the President to see him off. A number of senior Saudi leaders including members of the royal family were also present at the airport to see off the President.

Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud, who accompanied the President, also had discussions with the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Al Sa'ud Al-Faysal. The Saudi Foreign Minister called on him at Al-Hamra Palace last night where the two ministers talked about the current situation in the Gulf arising out of the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

Meets With Jaber

Another report from Taif adds: President Ershad has expressed Bangladesh solidarity with the people and government of Kuwait under the leadership of its Amir, Sheikh Jabir Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, during a meeting with the Kuwaiti leader here on Friday.

The President, who flew here from Jeddah Friday afternoon, met the Amir of Kuwait who has been staying here since Kuwait was invaded and annexed by Iraq on 2 August.

During the 45-minute discussions with Sheikh Jaber, President Ershad reiterated Bangladesh's stand for full implementation of the Security Council resolutions calling for withdrawal of Iraqi troops and restoration of legitimate government of Kuwait under the leadership of the exiled Sheikh.

The Amir of Kuwait, expressed his gratefulness to the people and government of Bangladesh for showing their

total solidarity with his country, particularly in this critical hour of his people and government.

The meeting, held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere, was also attended by Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud and senior Kuwaiti leaders.

National Awami Party Changes Name, Aims Told

Leaders' Statement

91AS0172A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 13 Sep 90 p 10

[Text] National Awami Party led by Syed Altaf Hossain and Pir Habibur Rahman has now been renamed "Ganatantri Party."

The renaming of the party was announced at a Press conference held at the National Press Club on Wednesday. The Press conference was jointly addressed by Syed Altaf Hossain and Azizul Islam Khan, President and General Secretary respectively, Ahmedul Kabir and Ali Haider Khan, members of the presidium of the party.

In a written statement read out at the Press conference the leaders of Ganatantri Party said it aims at establishing an exploitation free democratic and secular society in the country. The party, they said favoured establishment of parliamentary democracy in the country and introduction of mixed economy with establishment of industries, bank, insurance companies in the private sector along with the public sector.

The party would pursue non-aligned foreign policy and oppose imperialism, colonialism, racism, communalism and zionism. The party would continue its efforts to strengthen friendly relations and promote cooperation among the member countries of SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation].

The party, the leaders said would fight along with others to force the government to quit, hold elections under a neutral government.

Some new faces including Mr Abdul Khaleq, a former Inspector General of Police have joined the new party, the leaders claimed. Present at Press conference were Pir Habibur Rahman, former IG Abdul Khaleq, Chowdhury Harunur Rashid, Syed Badruddin Hossain, Aminul Islam Badshah and Ali Haider Khan.

Further Details

91AS0172B Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
13 Sep 90 p 8

[Text] Leaders of the newly-formed Ganatantri Party said that they would join any movement to bring an end to 'autocratic rule' and to establish an honest, democratic and patriotic government.

Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, President of the party Syed Altaf Hossain gave a detailed account of the formation of the party by

marginating a faction of the National Awami Party and Projatantric Party. He listed a 21-point programme of the party.

The press conference was attended by a host of party leaders including General Secretary Azizul Islam Khan, presidium members Ahmedul Kabir, Abdul Khalek and Syed Badruddin Hossain. The Ganatantri Party chief said that his party would continue movement from the platform of Eight-Party Alliance and make efforts to forge greater unity by expanding the alliance.

He called upon all to launch a united movement for establishing a patriotic and democratic government through free and fair election under a non-partisan and neutral caretaker government.

About the Gulf crisis Syed Altaf Hossain said that his party condemned the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq and at the same time protested the deployment of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. He was also critical of sending Bangladesh troops to Saudi Arabia and said that it was a violation of Article 25 of the Constitution.

The 21-point programme announced at the press conference included establishment of a secular, democratic and exploitation free society, growth of independent and mixed economy, maximum priority to education and social security to poor and low income groups.

Obaid Faction of Nationalists Forms New Party

Obaidur Rahman Announcement

91AS0171A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
15 Sep 90 pp 1, 8

[Text] A faction of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by KM Obaidur Rahman, has been renamed 'Bangladesh Janata Dal.' With the change of the party's name its aims and objectives have also been revised.

Announcing the changes at a press conference held at the party's Asad Avenue central office yesterday afternoon, Obaidur Rahman said his party would struggle for a federal parliamentary form of government instead of the present unitary presidential system. Explaining the reasons behind the changes, Mr Obaid said the steps were taken with the aim of creating a new flow in the country's political arena and intensifying the current opposition movement to establish a progressive and democratic government.

Mr Obaid was dropped from the post of Secretary General of the united BNP in December 1988. Terming the act by BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia undemocratic, KM Obaid along with Barrister Abul Hasnat, Najir Ahmed and others deserted the Khaleda led BNP and formed a new faction of BNP with himself as its chairman the same year.

In this context, Mr Obaid said "through the political activities of the last two years, we felt that two political

parties with different ideals cannot exist under the same name and this led us to change the name and objectives of the party.

Criticising the existing presidential form of government in the country, he said in Bangladesh the system was turned into a one-man show of rule. Under the system, the President became the source of all power and the Parliament, the Cabinet and the Prime Minister became merely 'rubber stamp' bodies. Besides, a group of sycophants were created to appease the ruling circle, Mr Obaid said adding this system also had been causing untold sufferings to the people.

Giving an outline of a state mechanism, for which his newly formed party would fight, K.M. Obaid demanded the formation of four provinces with the existing four divisions in the greater interest of 'balanced development' throughout the country. He pointed out that it was impossible to rule and govern 12 crore people from one secretariat. In that case the provinces should enjoy a sort of autonomy and Federal government would control only defence, foreign policy, post and telecommunication, foreign trade and currency, he added. Under his proposed outline, Mr Obaid said that the high courts would act as the highest court of the provinces while the supreme court would be the highest court and guardian of the country's Constitution.

Besides, he said, the Prime Minister would be the head of the federal government while the President would act in consultation with the Prime Minister as head of the state.

Mr Obaid also demanded changes in the country's education policy, which he termed a colonial one. He also demanded enhanced budget in the agricultural, industrial and education sectors, planning for proper utilisation of the natural and mineral resources, long-term planning to control flood, training of the military in modern way and compulsory military training for each of the adult people, a foreign policy with the principle of "friendship to all, enmity to none" and friendly relations with the neighbouring and Muslim states. He also called for opposition unity on the spirit of Liberation War to oust the present 'autocratic' regime.

Standing, Executive Committee

*91AS0171B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 18 Sep 90 p 10*

[Text] The National Standing and Executive Committees of the Bangladesh Janata Dal was announced by the party chief K.M. Obaidur Rahman, reports UNB [United News of Bangladesh].

The party was previously styled BNP (Obaid).

K.M. Obaidur Rahman heads both the 12-member standing and 97-member executive committees, says a Press release.

The Standing committee included Atauddin Khan, Mirza Abdul Halim, Begum Shahina Khan, Justice Maksudur Rahma, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Mansur Ahmed, Advocate Enayet Ali, Barrister Mahbul Kabir, Ahmed Ali Manik, Advocate Kazi Abdul Wahab and Rezabudoula Chowdhury.

Obaidur Rahman and Mirza Abdul Halim are the president and General Secretary respectively of the newly formed executive committee.

Foreign Office Briefs on Effects of Mideast Crisis

20 September Briefing

*91AS0161A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 20 Sep 90 p 1*

[Text] The explosive Middle East situation will cause loss to the tune of 600 million dollars to Bangladesh this year as its trade, shipping oil import and remittances from the Gulf has been affected seriously following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait early last month.

Bangladesh has prepared an account of her possible loss and the impact of the Gulf crisis on its national economy which was circulated among the donor countries seeking assistance and cooperation for facing this unprecedented situation.

Of the 600 million dollar loss, 220 million dollar has been estimated to meet the enhanced bill for oil import, 160 million dollars as remittance loss due to evacuation of thousands of Bangladeshi nationals from Kuwait and Iraq, 36 million dollars to bear the cost of repatriation of the Bangladeshis from the troubled areas and 120 million dollar loss in trade and export.

This figure excludes the loss of bank deposits, gratuity and other benefits and assets of the Bangladeshi workers who had to leave Kuwait and Iraq following the Gulf crisis. The Government has requested the repatriated workers from the Gulf to inform about their personal loss.

Foreign Secretary Mr Abul Ahsan who returned home after attending the conference of LDCs [less developed countries] in Paris said that among the 41 LDCs Bangladesh was one of the most affected countries as the remittances from Bangladeshi nationals working in the Gulf region declined due to the Middle East crisis and its exports to the region had been affected badly. He hoped that the donor countries and agencies would assist Bangladesh in tackling this unforeseen crisis.

Meanwhile, 35,178 Bangladesh nationals who fled from Kuwait had been repatriated to Dhaka by 132 flights till Wednesday morning. Of them about 24,000 were flown from Jordan where thousands are still waiting for their repatriation.

More Details Given

91AS0161B Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
20 Sep 90 p 1

[Text] Bangladesh has estimated its 'annual loss' at about 600 million U.S. dollars due to the Gulf crisis arising out of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

This was disclosed by Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan when asked at a regular briefing yesterday about Bangladesh's loss due to the present Gulf crisis.

The annual loss, he said, included financial loss for repatriation operation, loss of remittances from Kuwait and Iraq, aid commitment from Kuwait, and export earnings and additional fund to be required for increased oil price.

Mr Ahsan said because of the fuel price hike due to the present crisis, Bangladesh would need an additional import bill of 220 million dollars besides the existing amount of 440 million dollars.

Apart from the savings and other assets left behind by the Bangladesh nationals which were now being processed, he said Bangladesh would incur an annual loss of 160 million dollars on account of remittances by Bangladeshis who used to work in Kuwait and Iraq besides a firm commitment of 56 million dollars made by the Kuwaiti government for development projects.

Bangladesh's export earning amounting to 120 million dollars from the two countries stopped due to imposition of UN sanctions after Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August, he said and added Bangladesh had to bear an additional expenditure of 37 million dollars for bringing back home her stranded nationals from the Gulf.

The foreign secretary recalled with gratitude the contributions being made by different friendly countries to Bangladesh to meet the adverse situation created by the Gulf crisis.

He rejected the idea of sending food and medicine to Iraq and Kuwait toeing the line of India which is trying to send such supplies to the two countries without any UN supervision when an economic sanction is in force. "We have no information of any acute food shortage there for which we can adopt such means," he remarked.

The foreign secretary replied in the negative when asked whether the Bangladesh ambassador in Kuwait and other diplomats who are now in Baghdad on their way back home, were detained by the Iraqi authorities.

Mr Ahsan said we are negotiating with the Iraqi government for exit permit so that they could return home.

He told another questioner that no information was available from the Iraqi government about the 2,000 Bangladesh nationals who have been reportedly engaged in forced-labour by the invading Iraqi troops in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, New Zealand offered three flights, Paris Red Cross Society one flight and Switzerland two flights for bringing back stranded Bangladesh nationals from Amman and Diyar Bakir in Turkey.

Increase in Estimate

91AS0161C Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 24 Sep 90 pp 1, 10

[Text] Vice-President Moudud Ahmed said on Sunday Bangladesh economy would suffer an annual aggregate loss of 1.4 billion U.S. dollars due to direct and indirect impact of the Gulf crisis, reports UNB.

He said the estimated loss relates to direct economic impact on export and remittance (both official and unofficial) earnings, repatriation expenses, and stuck-up cash holdings, savings and other personal assets of the returnee Bangladeshis from Kuwait and Iraq.

Indirect losses in agriculture and industrial production, insurance, shipping and aviation, and higher import bill are also included in the estimated annual loss.

The Vice-President, who heads the Emergency Management Committee, was talking to a group of senior journalists at the Secretariat.

Moudud, quoting from the report prepared by Finance Minister M.A. Munim as the chief of a separate committee, said the Gulf crisis would inflict on the country a local currency deficit of Tk [Taka] 1,000 crore.

The fall on the country's foreign exchange reserves will also be "severe" as the loss in foreign currency because of the Gulf crisis has been estimated at about 600 million dollars, he told the newsmen.

The Vice-President however, noted the foreign exchange reserve position is "quite comfortable now at 560 million dollars and there is no cause for any immediate concern."

Asked about any pressures on foreign exchange reserves over the next two months because of payments for servicing liabilities, Moudud said receipts of external assistance under financial and energy sector credits from the World Bank would be higher than such payments.

About import operations, he said daily openings of Letters of Credits (LCs) averaged 3.97 million dollars this month compared to 7.24 million dollars in August and 4.48 million dollars in July. These LC openings exclude imports for aided projects.

Moudud stated that LCs worth 30 million dollars were opened last month for the import of 200,000 tons of crude petroleum from Saudi Arabia at 28 dollar per barrel. Negotiations are now on for importing crude petroleum from Malaysia and Indonesia.

About repatriation of stranded Bangladeshis from the troubled Gulf region following the 2 August Iraqi invasion of its tiny neighbour, he said some 43,441 expatriates were airlifted to Dhaka by 154 flights till 10 am on Sunday.

Bangladesh Biman which has so far operated 39 flights with each costing 200,000 dollars will now operate only 4 flights a week, instead of 2 flights a day earlier.

Moudud said the flight operations by the national airliner involved 8.8 million dollars till date, and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a UN affiliate, had requested a detailed account of the same for "possible reimbursement."

He observed President Ershad had played a key role in arranging the repatriation of the stranded Bangladeshis so quickly.

Only 10,000 Bangladeshis are now awaiting repatriation as per the available list, he informed the newsmen.

More than one lakh Bangladeshis were working in Kuwait and Iraq before the start of the persisting Gulf crisis.

SKSD Executive Committee 'Resents' Troops Sent to Gulf

91AS0169A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
18 Sep 90 p 8

[Text] Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal [SKSD] has called for unity of the democratic forces to work up the current movement aimed at unseating the present Government.

The call was given at the two-day meeting of the party's executive committee that ended yesterday.

The central leaders Siddiqur Rahman ABM Faruq Khurshed Alam, Sudhir Sen and Amirul Islam addressed the meeting. The meeting expressed concern over the sharp increase in the prices of the essentials and held the Government responsible for failure to check the price hike.

The meeting also resented dispatch of Bangladeshi troops to Saudi Arabia saying that such action had endangered the safety and security of Bangladeshis stranded in Kuwait and Iraq.

Dhaka Support for Palestinians Reaffirmed

91AS0167A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
5 Sep 90 p 3

[Text] Information Minister Mizanur Rahman Shelley Monday reaffirmed the complete support and solidarity of Bangladesh with the cause of the Palestinian brethren for realisation of their cherished goal, reports BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest at a seminar here on the occasion of thousand days of the Palestinian brave uprising (Intifida) Dr Shelley said Bangladesh was firm

in its demand that Israel must vacate all Arab and Palestinian territories, including holy Jerusalem occupied since 1967.

He said Bangladesh also fully supported the call for an international peace conference under the UN auspices as a means of advancing the realisation of a just comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. Such a conference must have the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO on an equal footing.

Referring to Intifida, Dr Shelley said Bangladesh had been wholeheartedly supporting the Palestinian cause, voicing unqualified condemnation of the widespread violation of human rights in the occupied territories, escalation in new Jewish settlements, expropriation of Palestinian lands, demolition of house, restriction on religious freedom, discretion of Holy places and collective punishment.

Presided over by Algerian Ambassador Maamar Ahmad, the seminar was also addressed by the Palestinian Ambassador Mohammad Shahta Zarab.

Referring to the thousand days of Intifada, the Information Minister said in the midst of great sacrifices, retribution and hardship, the objective and resolution of the Palestinian people remained as steadfast and unwavering as on the first day.

He said as in the past, the people and government of Bangladesh offer their rich tributes to the courage, determination and resilience of the Palestinian people in their hour of trial, and have a resolute consistent and unequivocal stand on the Palestinian issue.

He also said that the conflict remains a great threat to world peace, security and stability and a major test to uphold charter of the UN in preserving international peace and security.

Referring to the present Gulf crisis, Dr Shelley said this directly affects the course and objectives of the 'Intifada' and threatens to eclipse the long struggle and sacrifices of the brave Palestinian brethren. The Gulf crisis serves the interest of Israel by diverting the attention, energy and resources of the international community from the Palestinians and their uprising, he added.

The Information Minister expressed the hope that the UN and the world community in their preoccupation with the Gulf crisis will not ignore or overlook the need for urgent settlement of the Palestinian issue.

Palestinian Ambassador Shahta Zarab thanked Bangladesh and its government for their strong solidarity with the support for the Palestinian cause.

Indian Leftists Work Against Tin Bigha Transfer*9IAS0165A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
10 Sep 90 pp 1, 8*

[Text] Khulna, 8 September: Though the Supreme Court of India has given a clear verdict on 'Tin Bigha' transfer in May last after three decades of duel, the Forward Block, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and some Indian communal Leaders are again out to create obstacles to its handing over to Bangladesh.

The Tin Bigha, a 178 m long and 85 m wide piece of land proposed to be used as a corridor to two Bangladesh enclaves Dahagram and Angarpota is one of the many problems yet to be solved between Bangladesh and India.

According to information reaching here from across the border, BJP and Forward Block, two components of the left front of West Bengal government with two local groups Kuchlibari Sangram Committee and Agrani Kishan Shava were holding series of public meetings along the border districts of India, protesting against the transfer of Tinbigha.

Meanwhile Kuchlibari Sangram committee and Agrani Kishan Shava led by Agriculture Minister Mr Kamal Guha held several public meetings at different places of Jalpaiguri and Kuchbihar district of West Bengal motivating public against the Delhi Agreement.

Mr Sukumar Banerjee, President, BJP West Bengal unit said in Calcutta recently, that about 40 thousand people of 22 villages of Kuchlibari area who migrated from East Pakistan in early sixties would again be refugees. He also pointed out that the transfer would separate Dhaparhat and Kuchlibari from India.

Mr Sukumar Sengupta, President Kuchlibari Sangram Committee said the road link between Kuchlibari and Dinhat would be cut off if this land is handed over 'the miscreant would get shelter in the Dahagram and Angarpota.'

Besides, Kamal Guha, Agriculture Minister and Mr Nirmal Bashu Food Minister two leaders of Forward Block held massive rally along the bordering district of West Bengal.

It may be mentioned here that these two leaders, took the issue first to Indian Supreme Court after the Nehru-Noon pact in 1958 and got the ninth amendment passed by the Indian parliament. But Indo-China war in 1962 and Indo-Pak war in 1965 delayed the handing over issue.

The Tin Bigha problem is one of the evils created by Sir Radcliff. The Radcliff mission came to a conclusion to keep Berubari mauja, a Muslim majority area with the then East Pakistan. But under the pressure of some local leaders the mission handed over the entire Kuchbihar district to India.

In 1952, Pakistan first claimed Berubari. In 1958 by Nehru-Noon Pact it was decided that Berubari would be divided in two parts. Pakistan will get southern part and India the northern part.

But the then President of India took the issue to Indian Supreme Court under the pressure of two Forward Block leaders and the parliament had to pass the Ninth Amendment bill. Again in 1966 17 persons of the area filed a writ petition to the Supreme Court demanding compensation before handing over but the court rejected the writ petition. But the matter could not be finalised as the Indian Government did not make any gazette notification in this regard.

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Dhaka-Delhi relation was congenial to solve the disputes. In 1974, under Mujib-Indira Pact, Bangladesh withdrew her claim on South Berubari and instead of that India agreed to transfer Dhahagram and Angarpota, another Muslim majority area to Bangladesh. Meanwhile Berubari became Hindu dominated area. Under that pact India agreed to hand over Tinbigha to be used as a corridor between the mainland and two enclaves by leasing out with one Rupee as a token money.

Again a few persons went to court and at last the Supreme Court of India comprising five judges including Chief Justice of India gave judgment in favour of New Delhi government terming the suit as "fight against meaningless issue."

Beside, in 1982 Bangladesh and India agreed to a point that a fly over would be constructed by India at Tinbigha so that the people of Kuchlibari union could use Meckligange Road and Bangladesh would use the corridor to Angarpota and Dahagram through Patgram union.

Meanwhile it is learnt that Indian people were harassing the Bangladesh citizens and forcing them to keep out of Meckligange bazaar. The people of the two enclaves sometimes cannot buy essentials. At Dahagram and Angarpota Indian rupee is a stronger currency but thousands of people are inconvenienced. Tension is growing in the area day by day.

India Allows Transit of Returnees From Gulf Area*9IAS0160A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 21 Sep 90 p 1*

[Text] India has made arrangements to facilitate the transit through India of Bangladeshi nationals returning overland from the Gulf, reports UNB [United News of Bangladesh].

A Press release of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka on Thursday said, Bangladeshis will be permitted to carry their vehicles, household belongings and personal effects free of customs duty.

The transit would have to be completed within seven days from the day of entry into India.

A memorandum to this effect was signed between the two countries in New Delhi on 17 September which will remain valid till December 1990 or as may be mutually decided.

Special trains would be arranged by the Indian Railways, if required, to transport Bangladeshi nationals from the entry point on the India-Pakistan border to the exist point on the India-Bangladesh border, the release said.

Steps Taken Toward Repeal of Special Powers Act

91AS0162A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
19 Sep 90 pp 1, 8

[Text] The government is considering with due importance to repeal the Special Powers Act enacted by the then Awami League government some 16 years ago, reports BSS.

Stating this at a crowded press conference here yesterday Vice-President Moudud Ahmed said President Ershad had directed the Law Ministry to take necessary measures for the repeal of the Special Powers Act. "We are now scrutinising and examining this act and a final decision in this respect will be made public in due course" he said adding it would be repealed shortly.

The press conference was also attended by the Law and Justice Minister, Mr Habibul Islam Bhuiyan.

The Vice-President said, "we no longer want to carry the burden of this law which the present government had inherited.

Terming the present government as a democratic one, he said this government believed in the fundamental rights of the people, freedom of the press and independence of judiciary. The firm belief of the present government in these rights and principles had been proved through its different measures in phases, he noted.

Replying to a question, Mr Moudud Ahmed said another piece of legislation would be necessary to repeal the Special Powers Act. The government was considering this matter with due importance and the act would be repealed as soon as possible.

A bill to repeal the Special Powers Act would be brought before the next session of the Jatiya Sangsad, he told a questioner.

When asked what would be the fate of the cases pending in the courts under Special Powers Acts, he said the act needed scrutiny, examination and review to look into these aspects.

He told another questioner that this law was used during the period of all governments and particularly its application was all the more greater by the government which had framed it. He categorically said there were no political prisoners in jails at present.

Tracing the background of the Special Powers Act, the Vice-President said different quarters specially the political parties had described this act as a black law. Not only the political parties but also different professional groups and the journalists had criticised the act in the same vein.

The Special Powers Act, he went on to add, was not framed by the present government. The present government had only inherited this act, he said.

He told newsmen that when the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh was framed there was no provision in it to detain any person without trial. Under the Constitution it was not possible for anybody to detain any citizen without trial. In that Constitution framed by the Awami League government the fundamental rights of the people, freedom of press and independence of judiciary were ensured. Article 33 of the Constitution provided for producing any detained person before the court within 24 hours of his arrest and nobody had any power to detain a person without trial, he added.

Mr Moudud Ahmed further said the general election was held in the country in March 1973 on the basis of this constitution. But barely six months had elapsed after the general election when the second amendment to the Constitution was brought on 22 September 1973. This amendment had two main objectives. One was to make provision to detain the citizens of the country without trial and the other was to empower the government to declare emergency. By this amendment, a citizen of the country was deprived of his fundamental rights, he said and added that under the cover of this amendment the Special Powers Act was passed on 9 February 1974.

The Special Powers Act, he said, mainly aimed at suppressing the opposition opinions and opposition persons. Besides, some harsh measures were taken under the cover of this Act against socio-economic crimes. Under this Act, some new crimes were defined and provision made for the punishment. Armed with this act provision was made for holding trial through special tribunal sidetracking the process of existing normal laws, he said.

He said experience had shown that the Special Powers Act was generally applied at that period to deprive the people of their fundamental rights and the newspapers their freedom.

The Vice President said though unfortunate it was true that Awami League was now the most vocal against the Special Powers Act. The Awami League government which had framed the law was now describing it as a black law and criticising the present government for retaining it. Unfortunately, Awami League was not repentant at all for the Special Powers Act which they themselves had framed during their rule. We would have been happy had the Awami League expressed its repentance for framing it, he added.

He asserted that under the present government no fundamental change was brought to this law. Neither no new

definition on crime was incorporated in it. Only two amendments of very minor nature were made in it by the present government during the last eight years and a half.

He told the press conference that the fundamental character of the Constitution was changed through the Fourth Amendment in 1975. Under the Fourth Amendment, fundamental rights of the people, freedom of press and independence of judiciary were snatched away. On top of it, the country's judiciary was made subservient to the executive, he said.

Moreover, Mr Moudud Ahmed said, all newspapers excepting four were banned. Again the four newspapers were brought under the government control. The fundamental rights of the people as enshrined in the 1972 Constitution were suspended and the powers of the Supreme Court under Article 102 were done away with through the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, he said.

When asked if the present government was repentant for not repealing the Special Powers Act much earlier, he said "certainly not." The government was considering with due importance to repeal it since the law is a continuous process. President Ershad considered the law as being unnecessary at present, he said. He said "with the repeal of the Special Powers Act we will go back to normal law."

To a question, Moudud said the present government did not believe in political repression and neither it harboured any wish to suppress the opposition views. We want to prove that we are a democratic government, he stressed.

In response to a question, he said the government was going to consider again the issue of separation of judiciary from the executive.

He replied in the negative when a reporter wanted to know whether there was any possibility of holding the parliamentary elections ahead of the presidential poll. He held out the assurance that all elections would be completely free and fair. The elections would be held under the supervision of the Election Commission and the government would remain neutral, he said.

Austerity Program To Restrict Official Travel

91AS0164A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 25 Sep 90 p 1

[Text] The government, enforcing austerity in the wake of the current Gulf crisis, has restricted official tours at home and abroad to cut public spendings, reports UNB [United News of Bangladesh].

Official sources said on Monday directives to this effect had already been issued to all ministries and government offices.

Quoting from an official circular the sources said the government had asked all ministries and offices to strictly restrict overseas tours at public expenditure.

Officials have also been asked to limit their personal foreign trips in view of growing pressure on the country's foreign exchange.

The government has estimated at Tk [Taka] 1,000 crore local currency deficit in the current public spending and 600 million dollar foreign exchange loss per annum due to the persisting Gulf crisis triggered by the 2 August Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Officials said another government circular had directed ministers and officials to use public transports instead of official vehicles in official tours inside the country.

Bangladesh Communist Leaders Address District Meets

Need for Unity Stressed

91AS0170A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 16 Sep 90 p 3

[Text] Barisal, 23 September—General Secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Saifuddin Ahmed Manik today said it was necessary to formulate an alternate programme of united movement to oust the present government, reports UNB [United News of Bangladesh].

Addressing the three-day conference of the party's district unit at Aswani Kumar Town Hall, he called upon all the progressive opposition parties to forge fresh unity for establishing a democratic order in the country.

"The only alternative before us for toppling the autocratic rule is to initiate an alternate programme of movement" Manik said while addressing the conference as chief guest. But he did not elaborate the programme.

The CPB leader said acute shortage of food and lack of employment opportunities were prevailing in most rural areas across the country causing serious social tension.

He said that socio-economic and political developments could not be expected if the growers were deprived of fair prices of their produce.

Chaired by Anwar Zahid, President of CPB district unit, the conference was also addressed by different national and local leaders.

A colourful procession followed the opening session of the conference which paraded different thoroughfares of the town.

General Secretary Speaks

91AS0170B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 24 Sep 90 p 10

[Text] The leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh has stressed the unity of all democratic and progressive political parties and groups to press demands for holding of Parliamentary elections before presidential polls under a neutral, non-partisan government.

Addressing district conferences of the party in different parts of the country which began on 13 September the CPB leaders observed that the nation was faced with a severe crisis. No single party or group could salvage the situation, they observed while underlining unity of the democratic and patriotic forces, according to a CPB Press release on Thursday.

'Unprecedented' Rise in Newsprint Price Condemned

91AS0168A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 5 Sep 90 pp 1, 10

[Text] The sudden rise in the price of newsprint by Taka 4,000 per ton has come under serious criticism by all concerned. Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP), publishers, printers and political parties condemned the unprecedented price of the newsprint by 28.7 percent without considering the plight of the general public. The price was enhanced without any prior intimation.

Until the recent escalation of prices, the newsprint price was stabilised at Taka 14,000 per ton. In recent times, there had been many escalations of the newsprint prices. On 15 June 1989, the price was raised to Taka 17,340 from Taka 13,750 with widespread protests coming from all fronts. The newspaper industry, being the hardest hit protested the price hike and the government was constrained to bring the price of the newsprint down to Taka 14,000 per ton.

Over the years, the newsprint price was raised threatening the newspaper and publishing houses. The fresh enhancement is likely to affect the newspaper industry grossly. The Khulna Newsprint Mills, the lone producer of the newsprint under Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation has attributed the cause to the increase in prices of furnace oil.

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) maintained that the cost of production of the newsprint had gone up to Taka 17,000 per ton and as a result, the BCIC claimed, it became necessary to refix the prices. The Corporation did not, however, say whether the government was ready to offer subsidised rate for the newspapers.

BSP

Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad, in a statement on Monday, said the sudden rise of the newsprint price has

caused unprecedented additional expenditure in newspaper publication. It said this expenditure will rise to Taka 10 to 20 lakh per month which will result in a serious blow to the whole newspaper industry.

The BSP maintained that the government knew well how the government trust and state-subsidised papers are run. It said the government employees do not get gratuity if they enjoy contributory provident fund facilities but in case of the newspapers, both the facilities were made compulsory, the BSP added. The newspapers owners are compelled to bear the income taxes of the newspapermen although the government does not bear the taxes of its employees. The government rate of the advertisements is much lower than that of the newspapers. Besides, the quantum of ads and its budget has not been raised, the BSP maintained.

By controlling the Wage Board through various means, the crisis prevailing in the newspaper industry was allowed to be deepened. By resorting to these activities, the government has seriously hit the newspaper industry from flourishing and wanted it to be dependent on the government. Expressing serious concern over the price hike the BSP demanded that the newsprint price hike be reconsidered and be refixed it at the earlier price.

Council of Editors

Bangladesh Council of editors, in a statement, questioned the rational of such an unprecedented price hike just showing only the price rise of furnace oil. The Council said with this new enhancement, the price was raised thrice in a period of three years. It left an adverse effect on the newspaper publication, education and in cultural fields. The Editors Council said that the sudden rise was against the government rules to support the newspaper industry by giving subsidy. It said President Ershad had announced to pay a subsidy to the tune of Taka 3,340 per ton in a meeting with the Editors which was highly justified in the context of government's overall principles and practices. The Editors Council felt that the recent BCIC decision was not commensurate with the policy being pursued by the government.

In a statement, Sheikh Hasina, President, Bangladesh Awami League and leader of the 8-party alliance said the decision to enhance the newsprint price would deepen the crisis in the newspaper industry. Protesting the directive to raise the newsprint price by 28 percent, the greater national sectors like education will also be seriously affected. The prices of text books, papers etc will get a boost and universal education programme will be jeopardised she said.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) General Secretary Abdus Salam said the enhancement of the newsprint price would leave negative impact on the newspaper industry, publishing and printing industries. He said education sector would also badly suffer. In a statement to the Press on Monday, he said the decision to enhance newsprint price was an anti-people move and it had made the autocratic character of the present government

more public. Protesting the price rise, he said the step was aimed at government's policy of squeezing the newspapers industry and the publishing industry in the country.

Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers Association, Nine-Party student alliance, Jatiyo Janata Party, Bangladesh People's League, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal in separate statements on Monday condemned the sudden rise of newsprint prices which resulted in deep crisis in newspaper industry in particular. They asked the government to reconsider the decision to refix the price to its previous rate.

INDIA

Soviets Growing Insensitive to Indian Problems

91AS0175A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 5 Oct 90 p 14

[Article by Zafar Imam]

[Text] There are enough indications now to suggest that the Prime Minister, Mr V.P. Singh's optimism over the state of Indo-Soviet relations after his visit to the Soviet Union in July is somewhat misplaced. There are now powerful groups in the Soviet decision-making process who are working overtime towards the "Westernisation" of the Soviet system, including its foreign policy. The Soviet foreign minister, Mr Eduard Shevardnadze, is himself an ardent votary of the West, while the members of the powerful Presidential Council, except Mr E. Primakov are all Eurocentric.

The Soviet Union's handling of the Gulf crisis confirms the impression that it has now turned into a continental European power, preoccupied with European problems under the Superpower umbrella of the U.S. The Soviet lost no time in ganging up with the Western states against Iraq. The complete disregard on the part of the Soviets for the plight of Indians and other Asians stranded in Kuwait is yet another example of the growing Soviet insensitivity to developing nations.

Gulf Crisis

The Soviet Union has sought to derive unilateral advantages from the crisis not only from the U.S. and Western Europe but also by cultivating Saudi Arabia which has turned itself into an U.S. military base. Now even Germany and Japan have become actively involved, for the first time since the Second World War, in likely U.S. military moves against Iraq. It is thus obvious that NATO has extended its operational area beyond Europe, in fact within an easy striking distance from Soviet Asia itself.

The Soviet Union's response has been to float the idea of Germany becoming a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Likewise, there is no Soviet initiative yet to encourage an Arab solution for the unlawful Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. This is most surprising since the

Soviet Union is still committed to defend Iraq against foreign aggression under the 20-year Soviet-Iraqi friendship treaty.

Growing Desperation

However, the Westernisation of Soviet foreign policy can be legitimately seen against the background of domestic compulsions of Soviet society as well as the growing desperation of the leadership in dealing with them. Moreover the new turn in Soviet foreign policy is also a logical consequence of the dilution of the traditional Superpower role of the Soviet Union. In the specific context or operationalisation of Soviet foreign policy in its low priority areas, like the developing countries, the deepening domestic crises and the increasing ineffectiveness of the Gorbachov leadership, both have begun to make confusion worse confounded.

Therefore, official pronouncements and assurances at the highest level on Soviet-Third World relations, like the one given to Mr V.P. Singh on the continuity of Indo-Soviet relations, need to be treated with caution. A crisis-ridden country, seeking to become Westernised by manoeuvres and compromises, can hardly inspire confidence among non-Westerners.

A familiar argument advanced by the Soviets in support of the continuity of traditional Indo-Soviet relations is that these relations are of a special nature based on the common interests. Of late, the Soviet Union has been repeatedly stressing that Soviet interests in developing Indo-Soviet relations remain operative, irrespective of changes in Soviet foreign policy and domestic problems. Currently, special emphasis is placed on the economic content of Indo-Soviet relations and hence the plan for a higher trade turnover and more involvement of Indian capital in Soviet service and light industries. Indian policy-makers have also generally endorsed this plea.

Special Relationship

This basis framework of Indo-soviet relations may have been relevant in the past. If India is an integral part of the developing nations, can it service a relationship profitably when one of its partners has become reluctant to fulfil its commitments? How can the Soviet Union continue to develop a special relationship when it is not interested in issues and problems vital for developing countries in general? This logically imposes limitations on bilateralism. The Soviet media has now begun critically to assess Indian policies on such issues as nuclear non-proliferation and terrorist activities in Kashmir and Punjab. The Soviets have also been persistently dithering on the settlement of the rupee-rouble exchange rate.

Cautious Approach

However, this is not to suggest that the Soviet Union and India should now become distant neighbours. Far from it. Indo-Soviet relations must begin now to give up some of its traditional assumptions. It would be, for instance,

better for India to stop treating the Soviet Union as a champion of causes vital to developing countries and look at it as a powerful neighbour, guided mainly by its own interests.

Such a view implies that we must reduce our traditional dependence on the Soviet Union. We must insist on complete and total reciprocity on the basis of, what the Soviets call, business-like relations. Hence, there is no point in renewing the 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty after it expires in August, 1991. Similarly, a cautious approach is needed for our own capital investment in the Soviet economy.

Indo-Soviet relations of the nineties underline the urgency that India must strive in earnest to build a system around the developing countries in general, and non-aligned movement, in particular, which can act as a check on the increasing insensitivity of the Western powers, including the Soviet Union, to the problems of developing countries. The present Gulf crisis is an opportunity to make a beginning.

Assam: Election Prospects, Possible Irregularities Viewed

*91AS0128D Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Oct 90 p 6*

[Text] The revision of the electoral rolls in Assam should have set the stage for elections to the State Lok Sabha seats, which were held over last year because of the alleged inclusion of "foreigners" in the previous voters' lists. Unfortunately, the ruling Asom Gana Parishad's ally, the All Assam Students' Union [AASU], has expressed unhappiness over the new rolls, claiming that the deletion of the names of those who had crossed over to Assam from neighbouring Bangladesh after 1966 is not complete. Several political parties, on the other hand, have claimed that sections of the electorate have been struck off the rolls. Union Home-Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who was supposed to visit the State on 21 October, would presumably have reacted to criticism by the political parties and AASU, but he was obviously overtaken by the crisis in New Delhi. The National Front's keenness to hold elections both to the Lok Sabha and the Assembly—which will complete its five-year life by year-end—is now a marginal consideration. But the most conspicuous exception to the dissatisfaction expressed over the revised rolls has emanated from none other than Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta who has given them a clean chit. Mr Mahanta feels that delaying elections—to the Assembly in particular—could lead to President's rule, memories of which are not popular in the State.

Mr Mahanta's desire for elections at the earliest has attracted flak from opponents who view it as a stratagem of the Chief Minister to keep the law and order machinery under his own influence when polling commences. Through the Chief Minister's credibility is not in peril at the moment and his supporters point out that conditions in Assam have not yet deteriorated to the

levels of Kashmir or Punjab, they would do well to keep in mind the disastrous after-effects of rigged elections in one of the two chronic national trouble-spots and the voting under terrorist pressure which took place in the other.

Government Blamed for Mass Suicides

*91AS0112A Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA
in Bengali 11 Oct 90 p 4*

[Editorial: "Not Self-Immolation, This Is a Massacre"]

[Text] The anti-reservation movement is gradually taking a destructive course. Many people did not like the precipitous manner in which the Mandal Commission report was presented to the public and given legal status. Hence it was not surprising that the movement against reservation would pick up steam.

Unfortunately, though, no popular movement can be kept peaceful these days. It is not just that hatred has become more pervasive. The fact is that destructive methods now outweigh the pursuit of ideals. Those who support movements and those who organize counter-movements both find themselves drifting toward violence. This cycle is evident in state after state. The caste hatred is also spreading like fire. Take the case of Bihar. One reading the news would get the impression that a full-scale caste conflict is raging there. Caste quarrels, unfortunately, are plaguing many places, and Bihar is no exception. And what is happening in that state today is really tragic. In two places in the Patna district police had to open fire to stop rioting. The clashes reportedly stemmed from the big public meeting that pro-reservation forces had organized on Tuesday. Opponents of reservation tried to foil that gathering. In response, supporters of reservation blocked the road. It has been alleged that cars were vandalized, bicycles stolen, and workers of rival camps abducted. Even leaders of the pro- and anti-reservation movements have become embroiled in the episode. Some are accused of shooting people, others had to rush to the police station for protection, still others were beaten up mercilessly. The Bihar government has instructed police to be firm in suppressing the disturbances. However, it is difficult to end the caste manipulation and caste hatred. Who can fathom people's minds?

Clearly, a group of antisocial people has taken advantage of the anti-reservation movement and unleashed violence. These antisocial animals become busy serving their selfish ends precisely when catastrophes strike peace-loving people. True, a large number of people are very angry over the reservation policy and their fury is assuming many forms of explosion. Probably many impressionable young people and idealist students are disturbed because of their uncertain future. They arrange to kill themselves in an effort to publicize their protest. They do not have the mind—nor probably the patience—to seek better ways to draw the elders' attention. The pain and the anger that prompt these tragic

suicides cannot be discounted, although nothing can justify killing oneself. Well-meaning people should stop political games and try to prevent the loss of valuable lives. The environment should be created so emotionalism and anger do not lead to self-sacrifice. Steps should also be taken to resist the nefarious activities of the antisocial animals. Words fail to describe the tragedy when miscreants burned a 14-year-old girl to death in Delhi's Ramkrishnapuram. It numbs human senses. While tender-hearted students were resorting to self-sacrifice, these miscreants did not hesitate to commit a murder. Perhaps they thought people would take it as another of the suicides. It is surprising how cruelty can make humans look so ugly, so disagreeable. Now it may seem difficult to tell murders from anti-reservation suicides. When will the government wake up [to the crisis]?

Transport Cuts Seen Making Economic Crisis Worse

91AS0128G Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Oct 90 p 8

[Text] The decision of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation [KSRTC] to cancel 1,300 scheduled services in view of the cut in diesel supply by the Centre shows that the moves initiated to effect fuel economy may be counter-productive. Among the schedules cancelled are 150 of the Bangalore Transport Service [BTS]. Some 130 buses in the Bangalore Division are to be withdrawn. A BTS spokesman has said 50 more schedules in the City may be cut from next month. It is also proposed to abandon 250 schedules on Sundays and public holidays. KSRTC and BTS did not provide efficient services even at the best of times. The massive cancellation of their schedules is certain to aggravate the problems of the travelling public. Many City commuters must inevitably turn to two-wheelers or independent means of transport because of the curtailment of bus services. This will go to defeat the objective of economy in the use of fuel.

If the Government is indeed serious about fuel economy it must improve mass transport facilities. A dependable public transport system may encourage many to give up use of their own vehicles, what with the soaring petrol prices making private transport costs extremely high. It is typical of the way the Government functions that it should first curtail bus services and not withdraw the vehicles it has placed at the disposal of the growing army of officials. It must certainly not be difficult for KSRTC to organise a bus pool for its officials who now use cars. If misuse of vehicles by Government officials is checked, there will be much saving of fuel.

There are reports that the BTS authorities are trying to cut down dead mileage from 15,000 km a day to 10,000 km. They must also explore the possibility of offering special incentives to staff members who come up with practical suggestions to achieve fuel economy.

The cut in supply has reduced diesel availability to BTS from 79,000 litres a day to 62,000 litres. The KSRTC's

demand that public sector transport undertakings must be given preferential treatment in the supply of diesel and petrol is quite justified. At the same time, these undertakings must improve their operational efficiency.

Karnataka's New Chief Minister Alerted to Challenges

91AS0127A Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
19 Oct 90 p 8

[Text] Mr S. Bangarappa, who became Karnataka's 12th chief minister on Wednesday, has a long political and administrative agenda before him. It is an irony that a party gifted with an unprecedented three-fourths majority in the Assembly should be lagging in the implementation of its election promises. The Congress(I) Legislature Party has demonstrated a rare sense of solidarity in electing Mr Bangarappa unanimously as its leader despite the party high command overtly desisting from indicating its preference. This is not to gloss over the fact that the Congress(I) legislators closed ranks fearing that dissension would give the politicking governor and his extra-constitutional advisers an excuse to dissolve the Assembly. It will be naive to expect them to remain united once the external threat to their ministry recedes. Indeed, groupism stoked by unfulfilled personal ambitions is certain to surface again sooner than later. The new chief minister has to reckon with this fact of political life in mapping out his strategy.

The Janata Dal leadership's hostile machinations in Karnataka have brought into focus the issue of Centre-State relations once again. Mr Bangarappa, in his public pronouncements so far, has not touched on this subject. But it is evident that if he strikes a bellicose posture towards the Central Government which is under the control of a party other than his, he will be opening up one front too many and the conflict will necessarily relegate developmental issues to the background. This does not mean that he must fight shy of seeking the State's due share from the national kitty. When the Congress(I) took over the reins of administration 10 months ago the State's finances were a shambles. Credit is due to the short-lived Veerendra Patil Ministry for having nursed the sick economy back to health. In taking up various programmes in the light of the improved financial position, the new ministry must keep aside political bias and place emphasis on development with social justice. Mr Bangarappa has rightly recognised that the core sectors of power, irrigation, agriculture and industry need high priority. It is not enough to make higher allocations on paper: there must be physical achievements to show.

Implementation of the O. Chinnappa Reddy Commission report on reservation for the backward classes, resolution of the controversy over permitting new English-medium schools, ending of the capitation fee muddle and initiation of steps to save sick public sector undertakings are some of the thorny issues facing the new administration. But, in the context of the recent

violence in the State, restoring communal harmony must be at the top of the agenda. The leadership must shake the administrative apparatus out of its inertia. When president's rule was imposed after the dismissal of the Bommai Ministry, there was a major reshuffle of officials. The process was repeated when the Veerendra Patil Ministry was installed. Mr Bangarappa has said there would be no witch-hunt. The new Ministry must make a distinction between officials who went out of the way to do the bidding of the previous political masters and those who merely carried out orders. It is necessary not only to insulate the bureaucracy from political vagaries but also make it responsive to the woes and aspirations of the people.

Karnataka: Fuel-Economy Moves Said 'Counter-Productive'

*91AS0128F Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Oct 90 p 8*

[First paragraph is introduction; words in italics as published]

[Text] Very little is dependable in the politics of a going democracy except the people's conviction that one world-saver at a time is enough—Alistair Cooke.

A grave crisis is upon the nation. The minority National Front [NF] Government headed by Mr V.P. Singh, which came up after the last Lok Sabha election, is teetering on the brink following the Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP] withdrawal of support. The Left parties are still firmly behind the Government, but they do not have enough strength in the Lok Sabha to help the National Front, with only 143 members (of whom 140 belong to the Janata Dal) in the 544-member House, stay in power after it lost the support of the BJP.

There was an air of inevitability about Tuesday's events. Mr V.P. Singh had made the mistake of tarrying too long before initiating steps to defuse the tension created by BJP President L.K. Advani's *rath yatra* to Ayodhya with the proclaimed objective of constructing a Ram temple at the site of Babri Masjid. By the time his advisers started producing formulas, it was already too late to find one which would save the faces of all concerned. His last-minute bid to avert the crisis was almost pathetic. His desperate plea for six months' time to sort out the Ayodhya tangle might have evoked a sympathetic response but for his record of procrastination over the last 10 months. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad had set the date for construction of the temple last year itself. When Mr Advani set out on the *rath yatra* it was clear that it would aggravate communal tension. Yet Mr V.P. Singh showed no sense of urgency.

The BJP's belligerent tone of the last few days left the Prime Minister with no option but to act or quit. It must be said to his credit that in the end he chose to go down fighting rather than surrender meekly to Hindu chauvinism. A dispassionate analysis of the BJP's actions suggests that its leadership had already made up its mind

to bring down the NF Government, and if possible to destroy the Janata Dal in the process, apparently in the hope that it could then emerge as the Congress(I)'s major, if not sole, challenger in the North. Whether its calculation will prove correct remains to be seen. Actually there is now an intense competition between the BJP and the Congress(I) for the Hindu communal vote.

Mr V.P. Singh has indicated that he is in no hurry to resign despite the loss of his parliamentary majority. His remark that he will show his majority on the floor of the Lok Sabha suggests that he entertains hopes of somehow making up the loss resulting from the BJP's changed stance. Since the Congress (I), with 196 members, and the BJP, with 85 members, together account for more than half the effective membership of the Lok Sabha, it is evident that he can knock together a majority only if one of these parties splits. After the failure of the daring attempt made by his Government to break up the Congress(I) in Karnataka with the help of the Governor, the chances of his succeeding in dividing that party in Parliament are dim, especially since he himself is down and out. As things stand, his own Janata Dal appears more likely to split them either the Congress(I) or the BJP.

Since Mr V.P. Singh's claim of continued majority support in the Lok Sabha is questionable, it is the duty of the President to ask him to face the House and substantiate the claim as soon as possible. At this critical moment, the nation needs a government whose legitimacy is not in doubt.

Analyst on Kashmir Valley Situation

*91AS0173A Madras THE HINDU in English
6 Oct 90 p 9*

[Article by K.K. Katyal; boldface passages as published]

[Text] New Delhi, 5 October—Pakistan is in a desperate hurry to induct arms and infiltrators in the Kashmir Valley, before snow blocks entry routes—as part of a plan to keep up the tempo of militancy during the winter. But this design has been foiled to a large extent, by the armed forces intercepting the gangs from across the Line of Control. In the process, they have apprehended a large number of returnees from Pakistan, secured valuable information from their interrogation and captured big caches of arms.

The mountainous passes normally close in the second half of October and the current operation by the Army aims at denying Pakistan the advantage it had intended to reap through meticulous planning. The reports of clashes, artillery duels and other forms of activity, emanating from the Line of Control every other day are to be seen in this context. The infiltration attempts continue and so does the preventive action by the armed forces.

To divert attention from the infiltration through hitherto untried routes in inaccessible areas, the Pakistani troops have tried intrusions in other sectors—though without

success. The Director General of Military Operations, who maintains a hotline with Pakistan has impressed upon his opposite number the need for putting an end to encroachments, but to no avail. The Indian plea for joint demarcation on the ground of the Line of Control, as delineated on the maps, was not acceptable to the other side.

While the dividing line in Jammu and Kashmir is live, there is no significant development on the international border, which shows Pakistan's preference for a low-cost, low-intensity conflict with India to a full-scale confrontation with its high cost.

Designs evident: Pakistan's designs are evident from an analysis of the changed pattern of the infiltration activity of late. At one stage, the Uri-Kupwara sector used to provide favourite routes, later the emphasis shifted to Poonch and Tithwal. And now it is the Gurais-Dress sector, where the subversives counted on the north-south lie of the land for easy movement. The increased, continuous pressure on the sectors, used in the past for infiltration, could also have led the Pakistanis to try the "pastures new." The attempted intrusion in the Kupwara area—the scene of heavy exchange of fire recently—was obviously intended to distract the attention of the Indian troops from the new infiltration routes. These tactics did not work. While keeping up the level of surveillance, the Indian forces were deployed in sufficient strength to counter the new strategy by Pakistanis—of trying infiltration in new difficult areas in the hope of getting away with it.

First clue: The first clue of the new Pakistani strategy was available on 18 September when two persons, captured north of Sonamarg revealed that a group of 90 including 50 Sunnis and some Afghan Mujahideen planned to enter the Valley in that area. Quick steps were taken to move some detachments by helicopter and other means. Just then, a group of infiltrators tried to storm the patrol base but were forced to flee, leaving behind a large quantity of arms. Indian troops decided to cordon off the area, and in the operations, that lasted three days and three nights, succeeded in apprehending or killing a sizeable number of those set for infiltration. The mopping-up operations still continue. Till yesterday, 18 of them were killed and 67 apprehended.

On 28 September, the Indian troops came to know of a large group, split into sub-groups, moving in the mountains north of the Sonamarg-Gund Road. Again, reinforcements were rushed, the area cordoned off which demoralised the infiltrators. Till 3 October 1,999 were captured and one killed. What they had to say during interrogation was revealing—that they, a group of 400 to 500, were sent to Pakistan, received training for a week or 10 days in the Gultari camp in the Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir from the army personnel and Afghan Mujahideen, that they were escorted upto the line of control and left on their own, that they were maltreated while in Pakistan, some subjected to unnatural offences.

Conclusions obvious: Certain conclusions were obvious. One, Pakistan intended to use this group (of 400 to 500) essentially as carriers of arms. Two, their morale was shattered by the quick army action with the result that they preferred to surrender. Three, Pakistan felt that time was running out, as passes would close after 18 October and the latest infiltration bid was a last-minute desperate bid to induct as large a quantity of arms as possible.

Another trend was conspicuous. There was an increase in the number of rocket launchers, and the surprising addition of anti-personnel claymore mines—manufactured in the U.S. obviously supplied to the Afghan Mujahideen but found their way to the Valley. Washington, please note.

Naval Scientist Exonerated of Spying Charge

91AS0174A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
5 Oct 90 p 9

[Text] Bombay, 4 October—Mr Justice S.P. Kurdukar and Mr Justice M. F. Saldanha of the Bombay High Court, while admitting a writ petition by Dr B.K. Subba Rao, naval scientist, challenging the constitutional vires of Sections 227 and 228 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, stayed the proceeding against him under the Official Secrets Act.

Arguing his case in person, Dr Subba Rao submitted he should be given complete discharge and action be taken against the prosecution agency for levelling false charges.

Dr Rao, retired from the navy as captain, was arrested on 30 May 1988 at the airport, about to board an aircraft from the U.S. He was going as a consultant on a joint venture in the field of computers between Ceat of India and AT&T of the U.S. Police claimed that a search of his luggage and residence yielded classified documents and charged him under Section 3 of the Official Secrets Act.

Dr Rao urged that the magistrate did not examine the complainant officer, inspector P.W. Sawant, as required under the code, ignored contradictions between the complainant and statements of witnesses and ordered Dr Rao to stand trial in the Court of Sessions for Greater Bombay.

Dr Subba Rao pointed out that the policy had kept the records and documents away from the Sessions Court. In February 1989, the prosecution led the Sessions Court to believe it had based its submissions on the records and documents and accordingly, Judge J.N. Patel, took the view that a prima facie case had been made out against Dr Rao.

Mr Justice Jahagirdar and Mr Justice Nirgudkar directed the Sessions Judge to reconsider the charge. Mr J.N. Patel then heard the parties and concluded that in respect of the documents, the application of Section

3(1)(c) of the Official Secrets Act stood ruled out. Accordingly, he exonerated Dr Rao of the charge of espionage.

The prosecution moved the High Court in revision. Mr Justice Agarwal disregarded the precedents cited and directed the Sessions Judge to proceed on the basis of an altered charge levelled on 15 January 1990.

Veteran Diplomat Laments Communalism, 'Debasement' of Politics

*91AS0127E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
20 Oct 90 p 8*

[Article by K.R. Narayanan, a veteran diplomat and scholar. He was minister of state for science and technology in the previous Congress(I) Ministry at the Centre: "The Tragedy and the Hope"]

[Text] There is a complex process of counter-revolution at work in India today. It is in operation in almost all fields—political, economic, social and cultural. It seeks to roll back many of the progressive trends which were set in motion during India's nationalist revolution.

That revolution was an all-encompassing phenomenon containing in its sweep elements of a renaissance, a reformation and an industrial and technological revolution—all mellowed by the spirit and method of Mahatma Gandhi, and by the half-heartedness and inefficiencies of democratic bureaucratism.

Revivalism

There was, however, a glow—a touch of glory almost—about that first fine revolutionary impulse. Today that impulse has not only spent itself but has begun to turn backwards.

The spirit of renaissance has turned into revivalism and obscurantism, conjuring dark forces from the degenerated depths of our past, turning the spirit of the reformation into growing intolerance, and industrialism into aggressive commercialism and a moral competitiveness.

Ideals like democracy, socialism and secularism have undergone peculiar transformations in meaning and content. The electoral process had been debased by such massive malpractices in many parts that but for the uncontrollable vastness of the electorate the whole democratic exercise would have been reduced into an immense sham.

In this land of appalling poverty and deplorable inequalities socialism has become a dirty word among the well-to-do and the educated, and politicians mouth it only to throw dust into the eyes of the masses. And secularism is being overwhelmed by the rising tide of ritualism, fundamentalism and plain communalism and casteism.

More than any other single factor, political corruption and the debasement of the political process seem to be at

the root of this disease that flourishes on the ancient evils of our society. Only one thing stands like a rock in the midst of this gloom and decay; the sturdy commonsense of the common man.

Have our times something in common with the counter-revolutionary wave which swept Europe after the 1848 revolution? Louis Bonaparte became the president of France in 1849 under a constitution essentially authoritarian and apparently liberal. He followed certain economic and social policies reminiscent of the competitive populism of our political parties in power—donations and loans to allure the masses, bank loans to workers, etc.

Commenting upon this attempt to bribe the people, Karl Marx wrote in his Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte: "Never has a pretender speculated more stupidly on the stupidity of the masses."

The Indian masses have more than once rejected political attempts to "bribe" them. Marx has more to say on this period of European history which has a contemporary ring for us in India. He described it as a period of "a motley mixture of crying contradictions."

Are we not today in a situation in India of not only trying desperately to manage contradictions but creating contradictions and getting entangled inextricably in contradictions? Marx had the following to say of the shifting alliances and allegiances and of the utter hollowness and opportunism of the politics of that time: "... alliances whose first proviso is separation; struggles whose first law is indecision; wild, inane agitation in the name of tranquillity, most solemn preaching of tranquillity in the name of revolution; passions without truth; heroes without heroic deeds, history without events, development whose sole driving force seems 'to be the calendar'; wearying with constant repetition of the same tensions and relaxations; antagonisms that periodically seem to work themselves up to a climax only to lose their sharpness and falling away without being able to resolve themselves...."

Surprising

Could anyone have described our current political predicament more realistically?

The situation is ripe for counterrevolution to feed upon and flourish—the counterrevolution against democracy, against socialism, against secularism, against the social, economic and political rights granted to the people, especially the weaker sections of our society under the Constitution and progressive laws put on the Statute Book by successive parliaments.

It is surprising that the social classes which are taking up positions of power in our politics are precisely those who are denying to the weaker sections rights and privileges conceded by the Constitution and our laws—and to the landless under land reforms, social, economic and human rights to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes, economic benefits to the small and marginal farmers, rights to the unorganised working class, and above all, denial of rights to women.

The major proportion of the injustices, crimes, violence and atrocities that are piling up in our society today flow from repressive attempts by the new feudal industrial classes to deny legal rights to the common people of our country.

Violence

Governments, themselves dominated to a larger or lesser extent by the exploiting groups, have neither the will nor the capability to put an end to such repressive attempts. And to make things worse the entire political process is being vitiated by violence of one kind or another.

The emergence of such counterrevolutionary violence propounding narrowly sectional, aggressively feudalistic, graspingly capitalistic, socially obscurantist, and incipiently fascist causes, is the greatest danger to India's unity, integrity and progress.

At the core of this counterrevolutionary movement is the peculiarly and perniciously Indian phenomenon of communalism. Originating in the Hindu-Muslim schism, it embraces today casteism and groupism of all varieties in a society which has been described as a congeries of societies. The competition, rivalries and tensions among religious, casteist, regional, linguistic and tribal groups have become so pervasive and explosive that we need powerful and overriding national socio-economic and psychological allegiances, loyalties, objectives and programmes involving the whole people if we are to lift the nation out of the morass into which it has been gradually sliding.

Instead, what we have are the politics of coming to power and remaining in power, power in its narrowest sense for the family and friends and castes and whatever groups there be.

In this desperate power struggle secularism has been the first casualty. A strange definition of secularism has been adopted, according to which the role of the state is not be neutral in matters of religion, but to promote positively every religion.

In a multi-religious society like ours it can only result in fanning the flames of competing and clashing communalisms with the Hindu communalism of the majority religion assuming ascendancy. The fact that the present government is so dependent on a communal party makes the situation dangerous. The danger is compounded when Leftist parties, placing temporary tactics above principles and strategic objectives, lend virtual support for the growth of communal forces in the country.

Even more alarming is the unwitting dissemination of fundamentalist communalism that is projected over the electronic media.

Nothing has contributed to the growth of Hindu fundamentalism more than the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as they were presented over Doordarshan. These great epics were dramatised with maximum emphasis on ritualism and violent fighting, shorn of much of their philosophical and ethical content. It was a weekly dose of soft fundamentalism for the people. The harm done cannot be wiped off by showing the Bible, the Koran and other great religious texts in the same manner.

It is tragic that the misinterpretation of secularism as promoting all religions is playing havoc with what has been the central principle of our democratic polity and social order.

Compounded

Equally tragic is the misconception that promoting religion is luxuriating in ritualism and even superstitious practices of the past and fighting over temple and mosque sites, and not spreading the values of truth, tolerance and compassion and living together in peace and harmony.

The tragedy is compounded when it is political parties and political leaders who are trying to take the people along such an insane course. The only salvation for us is the commonsense of our common people.

Commentary Alleges Government 'Hypocrisy' on Babri Masjid Issue

91AS0112B Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 13 Oct 90 p 4

[Editorial: "An Unbroken Layer in the Government's Resolution"]

[Text] Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh has reiterated that the Allahabad High Court's verdict for maintaining the status quo on the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid issue will be fully observed. He also has firmly declared that the government will use all its power to preserve mosques and other monuments of Ayodhya. Some ultra-conservatives may not like this clear-cut announcement of the government's decision, but all well-meaning people will welcome it. The people of this country are already caught up in a cobweb of many problems. In state after state terrorists are destroying peace. Secessionists have created great unrest. The whole country is reeling from the fierceness of the anti-reservation movement. Hatred is smoldering all around. On top of it all, the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri masjid issue is agitating many minds. Communal tensions are mounting in many places. Riots have occurred, and their recurrence cannot be ruled out.

The government of Vishwanath Pratap Singh has been a little shaky. The government has a hard time making up its mind on any issue. Then, too, it is dependent on the support of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The BJP's stand on Ramjanambhoomi has now endangered the National Front government. The BJP and Viswa Hindu

Parisad have vowed to build a temple on the site of Rama's birth. A group of people want to raze Babri Masjid and build the temple on the site. They contend that the mosque was built by force on the birthplace of Rama and insist on redressing that injustice. The ultra-conservatives are unwilling to accept the court order on the issue. Many believe no court has jurisdiction on the subject. [For them] it is not a matter of law, but of religion or religious belief. BJP President Lal Krishna Advani has warned the government that any obstruction to the building of the temple would lead to dire consequences and that the government would bear full responsibility for them. Advani is a powerful leader. Nobody can dismiss his words. The Rama-torch-carrying chariot procession that he has organized will end 30 October in Ayodhya, in that controversial spot where construction of the temple is scheduled to begin. From 21 October volunteers will gather in droves to take part [in the project]. Obviously, the matter is not so simple as it sounds. The chariot procession has created anxieties in many states. Communal tensions are rising in some places. The Muslim community is also in ferment. Imam Bukhari and others have announced the formation of a protection squad to save Babri Masjid. In fact, such announcements would not ease the unrest, but increase it manifold. One can imagine the fireworks that would result from a clash between the Viswa Hindu Parisad charioteers and the imam's security band. Whatever the cost, the mosque has to be protected and the anticipated clash averted. Otherwise, there will be a big mess. The government has said it will honor the court decision and has pledged to protect the mosque. It has to keep that word. Moreover, the BJP leadership needs to be reminded of its heavy responsibilities and the imam and his associated must be warned not to stoke the fire.

Editorial: Political Uncertainty, Narrowed Economic Choices

*91AS0128C Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Oct 90 p 6*

[Text] The political uncertainty at the Centre hold out the threat of a re-run of the events of 1979 in the area of economic management as well. That year the collapse of the Janata Government came in the midst of a severe drought. The inability to deal with economic issues resulted in runaway inflation, which took almost a year to bring under control. At present, the threat of shortages is not with us, but the fall-out of the Gulf crisis can only be tackled by a government with political will.

Over the past week, oil prices in the fickle international of \$27 a barrel (compared to around \$40 about 10 days ago) are still too high for the Indian economy. The Finance Ministry's estimate early this month was that with international oil prices of \$25 a barrel, the increase in the annual import bill would be of the order of \$2.4 billion. To which have to be added the fall in remittances from Kuwait and Iraq and loss of revenue from exports foregone in these two markets. A loan from the International Monetary Fund, which has been made out to be

inevitable, can still be avoided if the Government takes harsh steps to reduce the budgetary and trade deficits. In the short-run, both will mean deflation of a certain kind. But in as much as this will be an opportunity to effect a structural adjustment of the country's choosing, it will be preferable to the conditionalities that come with an IMF loan. However, such steps now seem to be out of the question. In recent weeks, attempts have been made to obtain various types of assistance from the IMF. But with the failure of each successive attempt, the choice is increasingly being narrowed to stiffer forms of assistance. Officials in what is now a government with little standing are currently considering a multi-billion dollar loan under the IMF's Extended Finance Facility. This is similar to that obtained in 1981 and one that carries the stiffest conditionalities. The Gulf crisis could not have been foreseen, but its effect could have been mitigated if the National Front Government had earlier taken steps to reduce the economy's vulnerability to unfavourable international developments. Now, all that the country can hope for is a quick resolution of the political crisis so that the Government can pay more attention to the economic tasks at hand.

Commentary Says Mandela's Indian Reception Was 'Overdone'

*91AS0128E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Oct 90 p 8*

[Article by Punyapriya Dasgupta; italicized words as published]

[Text] Nelson Mandela's use of such words as "wonderful" and "fantastic" in acknowledgement of his reception in India could not have been mere politeness. His hosts had gone all out to please him. Indeed, they had gone out of their way.

It is, of course, very good that the best-known leader of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa ended his five days in India with the happy feeling that he had received in this country everything he had expected: love, affection and material support.

Esteemed

Nobody has any doubt about Mr Mandela's claim to a niche in the Indian mind. He came as a guest, highly esteemed for his determination and suffering in his people's fight against racialism. But a legitimate question has arisen, whether Mr Mandela would have been less happy had the Government of India stopped short of breaching its own protocol in displaying its warmth towards him.

Mr Mandela was treated as a Head of State. Although he has been one (he comes from a family of chiefs). He is not even the head of the liberation organisation he belongs to—the African National Congress (ANC). He is the Deputy President of the ANC, officially one step behind the President, Mr Oliver Tambo. The Government of India may have the sovereign right to treat its

guest any way it likes. Gun salutes and guards of honour form no part of international law. The ceremonies marking the visits of foreign dignitaries vary from country to country and can be tailored to meet every need.

Yet there is a certain rigidity about protocol. That is what makes protocol what it is. A convention of international etiquette, followed by a country for years, is not lightly changed. The decision to treat Mr Mandela on a par with a Head of State and extend to him the most elaborate formal courtesies New Delhi is capable of showing to anyone, must have been made at the highest level.

Whatever the ideas of the Africa Division of the External Affairs Ministry might have been about an appropriate reception for Mr Mandela, the matter must have gone up, through Mr Inder Gujral, to the Prime Minister. Ultimately it was the feeling of Mr V.P. Singh that there was a need for an unusual departure from protocol in this case.

What was that need? It may be uncharitable to say that Mr V.P. Singh, beleaguered on the home front, sought some relief by overwhelming Mr Mandela with magnificent hospitality and securing from him a certificate for the highly controversial reservation policy. Mr Mandela's approving reference in public to the policy of reservation and his tribute to Dr Ambedkar, proved that he had been well briefed on what Mr V.P. Singh intended to do, *prima facie*, to bring up the backward in India. But to convince Mr Mandela of the wide vision of the present administration in New Delhi, it was not necessary to overdo the reception to him.

Embarrassing

If Mr V.P. Singh and his advisers thought that Mr Mandela had to be faltered a little more than necessary, they were not being respectful to their guest's intelligence. Even without the Head-of-State treatment, Mr Mandela would have appreciated the need for India's administrators to strive for the uplift of its down-trodden millions by the quickest means.

He was obviously not acquainted with the complexity of the issue. Otherwise he would not have made his unwary comment and landed himself in a controversy. An unconventional welcome followed by what sounded—rightly or wrongly—like a tutored endorsement of the Government's domestic policy by the guest from abroad, created considerable embarrassment all round.

India's high regard for Mr Mandela had been shown, well before he came out of prison, by giving him the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. A road in Delhi was also named after him although such naming is not usually done in a person's lifetime. Mr Mandela was going to be honoured in person this time with the Jamnalal Bajaj Award, an honorary degree in Banaras, receptions and banquets in New Delhi and a great public adoration only the city of Calcutta can offer.

Awards

If something more was required to prove the concrete worth of India's support to Mr Mandela, his people and their cause, there was a cheque from the Africa Fund, an assurance of Indian rupees that could be drawn upon by the South African blacks to pay for goods and services available for them in this country. Was it still necessary to create another controversy by conferring India's highest award, the Bharat Ratna, on Mr Mandela?

The giving of civilian awards by the State is not a healthy practice, especially in a polity like ours. When these awards were instituted in republican India the rulers would not agree that the spirit of the Constitution was being offended because Article 18 forbade the conferring of only "titles." The use to which such awards can be put was seen when Indira Gandhi made herself a Bharat Ratna—a few years before trying to sniff out our flickering democracy.

The award of the Bharat Ratna to Mr Mandela has unnecessarily added a new dimension to an already existing controversy. The correspondence columns of our newspapers show that the propriety of calling Mr Mandela a Bharat Ratna is questioned also by some of those who are not against the system of awards and are fully respectful towards Mr Mandela.

Overdoing things has its pitfalls. Some puzzles about protocol may now arise. If Mr Tambo continues as the ANC's President and comes on another visit to India, can he be denied a treatment any less than the one accorded to Mr Mandela?

Luckily, not many other liberation movements are left which are bound closely to India with bonds of deep sympathy. The Palestine Liberation Organisation is perhaps the only other comparable one. And the contrast can be clearly seen.

As Chairman of the PLO, Mr Yasser Arafat visited India many times and he was not invited to stay at Rashtrapati Bhavan or inspect a guard of honour in its forecourt, before he was named by the Palestine National Council as the President of the notional State of Palestine. His deputy, Mr Abu Iyad, unlike Mr Mandela, cannot hope to receive Head-of-State treatment in New Delhi.

Protocol has its quirks. In some monarchical States in Europe, the British Ambassador, as the representative of his Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, is privileged to hear 19 guns fire in salute to him but his Prime Minister, who can order him about, is not entitled to even one. The practice is probably an offshoot of some medieval divine right theory. It does not work in Republics. If tried, say, in a country like India, the idea will create enormous difficulties.

Consequences

Similarly, the decision by India in a sudden, big flush of friendship, to receive the Vice-President of a liberation movement as Head of State, can lead to unforeseen

consequences. Mr Mandela is now engaged in difficult negotiations with the leader of the white regime in South Africa.

His moderation is not to the liking of the radicals among the blacks. How Mr Mandela will come out of it is not known.

This was, therefore, not the fittest time for India to invest Mr Mandela's visit with an overtone of ceremonial aura, particularly when everything was being done to give him all the honour rightfully due to him.

Editorial Criticizes 'Naked Power Play' of Janata Dal

*91AS0128B Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Oct 90 p 6*

[Article by F.M. Cornford; first paragraph is DECCAN HERALD introduction]

[Text] Propaganda is that branch of the art of lying which consists in nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies.

Shedding the mask of morality, Janata Dal leaders from Prime Minister V.P. Singh downwards have begun a game of naked power play. Having lost the support of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], which was its main prop all this while, the National Front Government has clearly been reduced to a minority in the Lok Sabha. Given the composition of the House it is evident that a government which is opposed by both the Congress(I) and the BJP cannot command a majority. In the circumstances, democratic decency and political propriety demanded that Mr V.P. Singh hand in his resignation and leave it to the President, Mr R. Venkataraman, to explore the possibility of bringing into being an alternative government. If the President, after discussions with the various party leaders, came to the conclusion that Mr V.P. Singh still had the best chance of putting together a combination which could command the confidence of the Lok Sabha, he would have been obliged to give the outgoing Prime Minister another opportunity. This is the custom in practising democracies when no party has an absolute majority in Parliament. The Indian politician, however, is too much of a limpet to be comfortable with healthy conventions of this kind. That explains why Mr V.P. Singh, Mr S.R. Bommai and others are waxing eloquent on the virtues of testing a government's majority on the floor of the House so soon after they got an obliging Governor to trample upon this principle in Karnataka.

The Janata Dal's strategy, as emerging from the decision taken by the Cabinet's Committee on Political Affairs and endorsed by a meeting of senior party leaders (including Mr Devi Lal, but not Mr Chandra Shekhar), is to secure as much time as possible before facing the Lok Sabha. The preoccupation of the Centre and the States with the law and order situation created by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's move to start work on the Ram temple at Ayodhya offered it a plausible excuse for putting off

the day of reckoning till the first week of November. A moot question is how the Janata Dal and its opponents will use the time made available to them. If they use the time to find new partners and negotiate new arrangements, it must be welcomed. But Mr V.P. Singh's hints of a secular front against the communalists, Mr Devi Lal's vision of a rural front against urbanites and other party spokesmen's hopes of a backward classes line-up against forward castes all point to an unabashed attempt to engineer defections from other parties rather than promote a realignment of forces. The Congress(I) is playing the same game when it proclaims its readiness to support a Janata Dal government headed by someone other than Mr V.P. Singh.

Janata Dal tacticians are apparently planning to manipulate the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha in such a way as to put the Congress(I) in a situation where it will feel too embarrassed to be on the same side as the BJP. The Dal and the Left parties who lived happily with the BJP for more than 10 months should not make the mistake of imagining that the Congress(I) conscience will be troubled if it has to link hands with that party just this once.

Commentary Urges Focus on 'Right Economic Priorities'

*91AS0128A Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Oct 90 p 6*

[Article by Balraj Mehta]

[Text] It has been reported that as many as eight nationalised commercial banks have been found by the Reserve Bank of India to be sick.

While the profits of the banking industry as a whole have gone down, the sick banks have suffered losses ranging from Rs [rupees] 8 crores to Rs 40 crores after having eroded their reserves and paid-up capital.

This is a serious development in itself. But it would be a simplistic view if it is attributed to management deficiencies and corruption or malingering among bank employees. What must be of concern is that this is part of a wider malaise afflicting the entire financial system.

Investment

The brave effort of Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate to the contrary notwithstanding, deficit financing by the Government is unlikely to be held down to the level of the budget estimate. The position of the public financial institutions too is becoming tight. These institutions are no longer able to raise resources from domestic sources to assist in maintaining the tempo of investment in the economy.

With India's credit rating dipping in the world money markets, foreign borrowings is also no longer an easy option at an affordable cost. The idea that resources would be no problem and development with multiple objectives—from poverty-alleviation to accelerating the

rate of growth and modernisation to become internationally competitive—would encounter no road blocks, has turned out to be facile and fanciful.

The financial system in crisis is not a fortuitous development. It can be clearly and inextricably related to the economic liberalisation philosophy and the policy of letting the market forces determine the content and direction of the development process which gained ascendancy during the Eighties and are still guiding official economic policy and management.

This policy orientation is tending to be more and more out of step with India's level of socio-economic development. The result is spreading sickness in the economy society and polity.

A medley of forces and interests, Indian and foreign, have been working very hard and for long for what are called structural adjustments in the Indian economy and society. Even these forces and interests can no longer deny the need for great caution in the application of the principles of so-called liberalisation and marketisation. Though official policy and management in India are often praised by them for acting with prudence and caution, it would appear that India has not been able to escape the grave consequences of embarking on the road to economic liberalisation and marketisation.

The burgeoning foreign and domestic debt of the Government, erosion of the developmental and interventionary role of public authority because of resource stringency and creeping sickness of the commercial as well as development banking system testify to this, accompanied as all this is by sluggish investment in socio-economic development with a right order of priorities, inflationary pressures and an increasingly skewed incomes and consumption pattern.

The critical issue to be faced always is the optimal use of scarce resources, especially capital, in developing countries, among them India. Failing that, not only are development aims thwarted but there is bound to be insolvency of the financial system and its institutions. The growing number of sick industrial units in India and the large volume of credit advanced by the financial institutions, which is locked up in non-productive and speculative activity as well as in non-priority areas, illustrate this position.

The flow of credit entirely or even primarily in response to market forces does not necessarily make for either efficiency or even solvency of the financial system and can actually stifle impulses for broadening the social base of economic activity and enterprise in developing countries. This is emphasised by a production structure geared to the satisfaction of the market demand of the upper classes rather than the needs of the masses.

Doesn't Help

Not only are the norms of equity violated in such a dispensation but the results tend to be counter-productive if, for instance, credit is not directed specifically to priority sectors such as small farming, handicrafts and small industries, which was initially sought to be so directed, albeit inefficiently, in India after the nationalisation of the large commercial banks in 1969.

These priority sectors, as they are defined, cannot secure their credit needs in free market competition with the organised corporate sector. But powerful social and economic interests, with their claim to high credit-worthy status, are able to corner financial flows in the absence of a system for controlling these flows. The declining profitability of the banking system is due not so much to lending to priority sectors as the misuse of advances to big business interests and speculators.

It is also remarkable that the claims of current consumption of the upper and middle classes have lately begun more and more to encroach on the banking system and the community resources it commands. This tendency manifests itself in the form of a flourishing hire-purchase system and consumer credit to boost the sale of consumer durables and articles of luxury consumption of the upper and middle classes.

Important

Public initiative and intervention, political and bureaucratic distortions which need to be corrected notwithstanding, are of crucial importance in order to promote economic growth with equity in developing countries and the area of credit management can be no exception to this fundamental proposition.

This is not to deny the unexceptionable principle that the flow of credit should not involve subsidisation of interest rates in the case, in particular, of commercial enterprises. It was very welcome, therefore, that the latest World Development Report [WDRF] sponsored by the World Bank sounded a strong caution against the demand for cheap credit to bring down the cost of production by private corporations.

The financial systems, as WDR 1989 emphasised, must help to mobilise savings as well as deploy them efficiently. But to argue that financial systems have not only overshadowed but extinguished the importance and significance of the planned mobilisation and deployment of real resources in the economy—labour, land, productive assets and skills—for development is not quite correct, especially in the developing countries where large segments of the population are still placed outside the pale of the market economy and financial systems.

The effort to increase domestic savings for investment also cannot be limited to attractive fiscal instruments with high rates of returns for investors. This results in concentration of financial assets and generation of rentier incomes in society.

There has to be mobilisation of savings by compulsion in the form of taxation, especially taxes on incomes and luxury consumption of the high income strata, both to reduce extreme income disparities as well as to mobilise resources, financial and real, for deployment according to a right order of development priorities and for widening the social base of the development process.

This is to be combined with cost-plus pricing of products, except those which are of a mass consumption nature.

It may be of some interest to refer to the caution in WDR. It says: "Financial liberalisation, like other reforms, involves transfers of wealth and incomes. Creditors gain from higher interest rates and debtors lose. Financial institutions with long-term loans and short-term deposits can be adversely affected by interest rate deregulation that results in higher interest. Firms with foreign exchange debts can suffer huge losses when the currency is devalued.

"In the long run the change in relative prices is necessary to bring about economic adjustment; in the short run the losses can be political and economic obstacles to needed reforms. So the lesson is that the authorities must anticipate how reforms will change relative prices and how these changes will affect different groups.

"Considerations of equity and political feasibility alike may make it necessary to provide transitional compensation to those most adversely affected. All this suggests that in the initial stages of reform many developing countries will be unable to liberalise as extensively as some of the high income countries."

This somewhat lengthy quotation should provide to the policy-makers, planners and administrators in India some food for thought. Liberalisation is after all not a panacea. There are problems and constraints to be reckoned with. The sickness in the industrial sector which is spreading to the financial sector is a danger signal which must not be ignored.

Not Enough

Half-hearted and hesitant corrective measures such as tinkering with interest rates for borrowers, especially those who seek loans for purchase of consumer durables, and loans to individuals against shares and debentures, levy of a minimum commitment charge on unutilised credits, hike in interest rates for medium-term depositors which the Reserve Bank has announced may not be adequate to curb inefficiency and wasteful use of scarce capital and restore health to the financial system and enhance its development role.

More wide-ranging measures to gear the financial system to a right order of socio-economic priorities and development tasks and their effective and efficient implementation seem to be necessary.

Editorial Views Language Issue Outside Hindi Heartland

91AS0127C Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
20 Oct 90 p 8

[Text] Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav got a dose of his own medicine when his Kerala counterpart, Mr E.K. Nayanar, responded in Malayalam to his official communication in Hindi. Mr Nayanar, however, quite properly included an English translation of the letter with his communication to Mr Yadav. Mr Yadav's crusade against English has already created problems in his State where students face the danger of being deprived of a language without which higher education or even competition in the job market continue to be difficult. A similar attempt made in Madhya Pradesh in the late Sixties was shelved after candidates from the State began to falter in the all-India service examination. Mr Yadav is well within his rights to assail the snobbery of elitism which even a passing familiarity with the English language tends to breed in some, though his own son reportedly attends an English-medium school. But in India's diverse milieu any attempt to impose any language, even one widely spoken and recognised as an official language of the Union, can create complications. Many non-Hindi-speaking people share his views on English. But that does not mean that they will brook imposition of Hindi. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi was quite forthright—perhaps even a trifle alarmist—when he stated that "if English, which protects us as a shield, is banished, the Hindi sword will cut us to pieces." Mr Nayanar himself is not an over-zealous advocate of Malayalamisation, but the inconvenience caused by Mr Yadav's gesture, which was not in the best interests of mutual communication, and the offence it gave, drove the Kerala chief minister to deliver the riposte he did.

While it is desirable to promote the use of Hindi, its ardent votaries must learn to respect the linguistic and cultural sensitivities of the non-Hindi-speaking people. As long as reservations exist among the non-Hindi sections about the role of Hindi as the lingua franca, those who seek to force the pace will only end up by putting the clock back. This is not to suggest that Hindi's case has been lost. Hindi can hope to gain more acceptance when it ceases to be viewed as a cultural or political imposition. Outside the Hindi heartland the many advantages that flow from knowledge of English will ensure that it continues to flourish alongside of the regional languages. But as Mr Yadav has probably realised any hasty action will prove counter-productive. Communication will have to be conducted in a medium which is unexceptionable in form and intelligible in content.

Commentary Alleges Veerendra Patil's Ouster Uncivilized

91AS0127B Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
19 Oct 90 p 8

[Article by Ashok Mitra: "Out, Civilisation, Out"]

[Text] Must the episode be treated as mere routine? Mr Veerendra Patil might not have been impeccable as a

chief minister. Given the paralytic stroke he suffered recently, it might have been altogether wrong on his part not to have delegated his responsibilities as the State's home minister as soon as news reached him of the communal holocaust in Channapatna, Kolar and Devanagere.

It could even be that, notwithstanding the contrary instances of M.G. Ramachandran and Chenna Reddy, any other person, incapacitated in the manner he was, would have on his own vacated his position. There are still certain courtesies that are integral to a democratic ambience; such courtesies, considered in their totality, define civilisation.

Manipulation

The person who happens to be the leader of the Congress(I) and who was the country's prime minister for more than 5 years, chose to take himself beyond such pifflings. Politics, he decided, was all, manipulation was all. And the famous authoritarianism, trademark of the family, was once more in full display.

This johnny, the party's chief minister in Karnataka, is not Mr Rajiv Gandhi's cup of tea. He behaves much too independently. That is not acceptable. He must therefore be removed at the first opportunity.

A lovely opportunity has now arisen, in the form of a double coincidence, to get rid of him. The chief minister has suffered a paralytic stroke. Almost simultaneously, Karnataka has experienced a nasty communal outbreak which the local authorities have handled rather ineptly.

It is a fortuitous, but handsome, excuse; the Congress(I) president announces to the press assembled at Bangalore airport the peremptory removal from office of the State's chief minister. The point whether he possessed the formal prerogative to take the decision he took can be kept aside.

It is the way the Congress(I) president deported himself which is beneath contempt. Mr Patil had just had a cerebral attack; ordinary human decencies should have prevailed, nothing ought to have been done which ran the risk of aggravating his condition; a sick individual, in a climate of civilisation, expects some respect and deference from fellow human beings. But such civilisation, Mr Rajiv Gandhi has obviously no taste for.

He could not wait: the affliction of his bete noire was his golden opportunity; out, Veerendra Patil out.

The defenders of the Congress(I) president's conduct would perhaps emerge from the wings brandishing their version of social indignation, the governor's dubious decision would lend an extra shriek to their voice.

It was no time for the little civilities of life; Karnataka was burning; a minority community was being decimated; with the chief minister out of action, the State administration had totally collapsed.

If this nation is to be saved, those who kill and maim their neighbours, burn their houses, loot their property, must be ruthlessly put down. There must a government that works. Saving the country is a greater priority for Mr Rajiv Gandhi than worrying over the possible consequence Mr Veerendra Patil's sacking would have on his state of health. It is this capacity to rise above subjective consideration which marks out a Nehru-Gandhi from the rest of the political rabble.

Hypocrisy could hardly travel any further. The week he assumed charge as the nation's prime minister in 1984, close to 4,000 innocent men, women and children were slaughtered in the worst bout of communal frenzy in the country since partition. Mr Gandhi did not lose any sleep over those killings; he did not bother to organise even perfunctory relief for the survivors of that pogrom.

Our public men are not used to placing their hand on their hearts. Otherwise the Congress(I) president could also have been reminded of the sequence of occurrences which has now culminated in the massacres of Colonelganj (in UP) and Channapatna. On the eve of last year's election, his home minister, at his prodding, entered into a secret deal with a person who was avowedly the mentor of rabid fundamentalists. Respectability was thereby accorded to what was till then an outer crowd.

Responsible

That was not all. Mr Gandhi started his and his party's election campaign last year from the ramparts of Ayodhya, beaming the signal to Hindu chauvinists that once he was reinstated in power, the kingdom was all theirs.

The Bharatiya Janata Party beat him in the game, but the game, as such, was as much the brainchild of the nation's then prime minister who cultivated the Hindu lobby, descending to the level of even attending havans and ostentatiously seeking blessings from sundry temple priests all over the country.

Among the principal guilty parties responsible for the bestialities in Colonelganj and Kolar it is therefore necessary to list Mr Gandhi himself; Mr Patil's culpability, in comparison, is only marginal.

There is however little point getting sidetracked, the central issue at this moment is not the nexus between deeds and events separated by time. It concerns standards of behaviour in public life. A man has just had a seizure. However acute your compulsions, you simply do not go in, stand next to his bed and inform him that he was being sacked. There are other ways to handle such situations. These other ways are collectively known as civilisation.

But, then, it is the hour of the barbarians. Evidence is accumulating at a frightening speed that in this country diggers are at work removing the last vestiges of civilisation. Nearly everybody is after instant gains, and the means deployed could be as crooked as a Iago was capable of devising.

Frenzy

In case you are sufficiently cynically bent, it is easy for you to rouse thousands and thousands of young people on a cause which has strong emotional roots a few amongst these thousands, given the state of frenzy they are pushed to, would not think twice before embracing martyrdom.

Once a number of such martyrs' deaths take place, the frenzy would threaten to spill beyond and create a vast cauldron of hate. Hate would induce counter-hate. A life-is-not-worth-living-unless-those-nonbelievers-are-obliterated-from-the-face-of-the-earth syndrome would then take over. Primitive passion would move centre-stage. It would be the ideal setting for barbarians to set to work; innocent teenage girls would be doused in kerosene and burned with great eclat.

More mischief is afoot. In the total space of 3,288,000 squares kilometres India commands, one group of politicians have targeted for an area measuring only 500 square metres or thereabouts; the country is not worth having unless a Rama temple is installed on that particular patch of real estate. That property is currently a mosque; a temple and a mosque cannot occupy the same site; the mosque, simple logic, must therefore go.

Primitive can be defined as a framework of attitudes which steers clear of any reasoned weighing of costs and benefits attendant to a particular act. The entire nation is being blackmailed in order that that primitive logic emerges triumphant, and the mosque is made to disappear.

This slide into unreason is not the product of any autonomous development. It has been induced, and often under the auspices of the State. For weeks and months and years on end, brazen episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were displayed on the electronic media with the overt purpose of providing entertainment at the lowest common level and, at the same time, rendering the populace more spiritual-minded.

One underlying consideration was perhaps the hypothesis that people given over to spirituality would remain god-and establishment-fearing, and not overly let themselves be disturbed by consideration of lack of food, nutrition, potable drinking water, educational opportunities or opportunities for economic advances. Even as this process was on, the most outrageous demands by fanatic groups were put up with. Glorification of fundamentalist icons became the design of living.

As you sow, so you reap. A substantial section of the populace has taken the cue: nothing is holier in life for them than defending the supposed interests of their religion, their caste, their sect, their sub-sect, their linguistic fraternity; nothing is purer than the act of decimating those who do not belong to their religion, their caste, their sect; India is not a country, it is a kurukshetra, where bloodletting, in the form of a surcease of the enemy's existence, is the prime rationale for one's own existence.

The leaders lead, the followers follow, it is the very pits for the nation. A Veerendra Patil, who displayed the temerity to go away from New Delhi without bothering to call on the party's supreme leader, must be punished for his insubordination, never mind the manner and hour chosen to do him in. The nation is being made to say good-bye to a civilisation. It is a concordat of a sort. The chariot-riders rolling along in the name of Lord Rama and threatening to drag the country into a communal holocaust, or those others instigating the anti-and pro-reservation riots and immolations, do not believe in any civilisation either, Mr Gandhi and they go together.

The Others

But suppose some parts of the nation want no part of this non-civilisation? Suppose they begin to say that enough was enough, they had their fill of the Khurasans and the Gandhis and the Tikaits, they would henceforth prefer to live their lives according to their own choosing, in terms of their own, somewhat different, code of social behaviour; if there can be civil wars to advance primitivism, such wars are also arrangeable to thwart primitivism.

And, if, at that stage, some people decide that India pukes and they would like to get off, it is most unlikely that they could be successfully prevented from doing so beyond a period of time.

Editorial Condemns Press Mistreatment by Ruling Party

91AS0127D Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
20 Oct 90 p 8

[Text] The recent exchanges between the management of the INDIAN EXPRESS group of newspapers and the Tamil Nadu Government have turned the focus on the relationship between the state and the press. The newspaper management has charged that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK] Government has failed to afford it protection in the face of violent reactions from those annoyed with the virulent campaign by INDIAN EXPRESS against the Mandal Commission report. The basis for the charge has been the slackness of the police in tackling volunteers of the Pattali Makkal Katchi and the Dravida Kazhagam who have stopped newspaper vans and made bonfires of newspaper bundles on several occasions. An even more serious allegation levelled by the newspaper management is that powerful elements in the ruling DMK have hatched a conspiracy to cripple its publications. While there is a mysterious hint about

"intelligence" having confirmed its apprehension of a political conspiracy to stragulate its publications, the evidence offered is by no means conclusive. The newspaper group has received quick support from the DMK's political rivals, the Congress(I) and the Jayalalitha faction of the All-India Anna DMK. Since these parties' record on press freedom is no brighter than the DMK's, their enthusiastic endorsement of the newspaper group's charge must be termed an attempt to make political capital out of the controversy.

As the Hutchins Commission in the United States observed several decades ago, like all other freedoms, press freedom is, by its very nature, constantly in danger. The contemporary Indian media scene illustrates the danger of threats to press freedom from within to which the Commission had drawn attention. When the press throws away the objective principles of the profession it is imperilling its own freedom. But a distinction needs to be drawn between a spontaneous protest against something in print which enrages a section of the readers and a calculated attack aimed at crippling a newspaper. Legitimate and peaceful avenues are open to those who have grievances against individual newspapers. If instead of using such avenues they take the law into their own hands it is the duty of the authorities to act to prevent the mischief. The Tamil Nadu Government has clearly failed in this respect.

PAKISTAN

President's Actions Viewed Subsequent to PPP Ouster

91AS0117C Lahore VIEWPOINT in English
18 Oct 90 pp 23-24

[Article by Ghayurul Islam]

[Text] While announcing the dissolution of the National Assembly and the dismissal of the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Government, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan had listed several charges against the Government and only one charge against the National Assembly. This single charge related to the switching of loyalties by the members of the Assembly for monetary considerations—for which phenomenon the word 'horse-trading' was used.

Referring to this phenomenon, the President in his long indictment made the following observation: "People are aware that political confrontation has become a way of life and lack of mutual understanding a routine; escapism from realities was resorted to as a policy and necessary decisions were evaded."

'Commodity of Trade'

The President reminded the people of the "highly disgraceful violation of the people's mandate and of its treatment as a commodity of trade."

He said political stock exchanges were opened and political horse-trading was indulged in unashamedly. He further said that at the time of the no-confidence motion against the then Prime Minister, unlawful and unethical methods were employed to muster support for or against it, making the National Assembly a laughing stock in the eyes of the people and the world at large. The members of the Assembly remained in a way in confinement like hostages and were kept from voting according to their conscience through inducement or threats.

As far as the charge of change of loyalty is concerned, while the President's language was indiscreet and sweeping, smacking of a partiality which did not behove his high office, the persons involved in the change of loyalties have never been more than half a dozen on both sides. The President himself selected the Care-taker Government from among the members of the same Assembly and did not include in the Cabinet a single individual of known impartiality and integrity from outside the Assembly.

It was natural for the dismissed PPP to challenge the President's decision. The Opposition also in practice did not accept the charge. As far as it was the beneficiary of the decision through assumption of high office which it would not have got otherwise, the COP/IJI [Combined Opposition Party/Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad] welcomed the 6 August action. But as far as the charge against the members of the Assembly is concerned, it rejected it outright. The first decision the IJI and COP made was that members of the dissolved Assemblies would automatically get tickets and in constituencies where their candidates were runners-up, they would be given preference. The IJI and COP, by this decision, considered the performance of their old members, both morally and politically, satisfactory and above board and did not think it worthwhile to go into the merits of their candidature afresh in the light of the President's allegations.

Almost the same decision was taken by the PPP. The net result of the exercise so far thus has been the implead rejection of the charge levelled by the President almost by all parties. In view of the polarisation of public opinion, it is obvious that the successful candidates in the election would belong to either of the two main groupings and the composition of the new assembly is likely to remain more or less the same. The further rejection of the President's charge by the electorate is, therefore, a foregone conclusion.

Vitiated

This does not mean that there was no substance in what the President said. However, the whole exercise has been vitiated by the objective that was intended to be achieved. The purpose was not to give clean politics; it was to get rid of the party which, despite all its shortcomings and the compromises it made on basic policies, had remained suspect in the eyes of the powers that be. Among these vested interests, we have the military-civilian bureaucracy. The army has ruled the country for

25 of its 43 years existence. This rule was absolute. Political parties were often banned and the Press remained gagged through censorship, newsprint and advertisement allocation policies; whatever the junta did it never became public knowledge except through rumours. The top civil bureaucracy, of which the President is the doyen, ruled the roost during the military dictatorships. It framed rules and procedures—in the name of which references are now being preferred—which gave absolute discretion to bureaucrats and served their interests. The most glaring example of these self-serving rules and procedures is the capital city of Islamabad. Over 90 percent of this city is owned by civil-military bureaucrats. In the allotment of land and subsequent sanctioning of loans, rules and procedures were made to provide legal cover to the worst type of favouritism and nepotism. How is it that most of the palatial houses have come to be constructed and owned by top Government officials? These houses are not occupied by the owners, but are a means of receiving fabulous rental incomes, many times more than their salaries, either from the Government treasury or from diplomats or multi-nationals whose interests the owners once served or are now serving. And all this property has been acquired under rules and procedures framed by the beneficiaries themselves.

Essential Processes

Political and judicial accountability are essential processes of the democratic system. But they serve their purpose only if they are followed not only in a fair manner but, like justice, are also seen to be pursued in that fashion. In the name of rooting out corruption, hundreds of civil bureaucrats were summarily dismissed or retired by Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Bhutto and Ziaul Haq, but is there any less corruption or irregularity today than before the operations? The officials were thrown out because they belonged to cliques rival to those which had gained ascendancy as a result of the coups and changes of government. Officials who learn to remain on the right side of the powerful groups indulge in blatant corruption. And yet they not only stay out of the net but reach the top of the ladder.

So has been the case with the politicians. There have been PRODA [Public and Representative Officer Disqualification Act 1949, 1954], EBDO [Elective Bodies Disqualification Order 1959, 1969], and so on and many politicians were disqualified under these laws. But did it bring any improvement?

The President in his 6 August Order spoke of the erosion of the mandate of the Assembly "by internal dissension and friction and persistent and scandalous horse-trading." Dissension and friction are the essence of a parliamentary system. Without contention it cannot function. As regards 'scandalous horse-trading,' the President may be reminded that when the august Senate was resurrected after eight years of mummification, its coming into being was accompanied by a new terminology of "bakra mandi," or cattle bazar, where votes

were openly sold and bought. In the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province], Gen Fazle Haq had used the jhurloo of his magic sword and got all members elected unopposed. Half of that Senate is still in existence. The mention of these events is relevant to underline the fact that corruption in this country has lost its loathsome meaning. What is crucial is on which side of the power magnet one is.

Secret Funds

In the context of the current accountability, secret funds have been for the first time dragged into the fray. These are said to have been used to buy the loyalty and support of the MNAs [members of National Assembly]. These funds have always been there at the disposal of the government of the day. Their amount and uses have always been kept secret. These have always been outside the purview of detailed auditing. These secret funds are not budgeted under any special head. However, by piecing together information leaked out by interested persons, their volume can be gauged. These funds are reported to be included under three heads. Some of them are said to be under the head of the Cabinet Division, some under the Ministry of Interior to be used by the Intelligence Bureau, and a major portion under Defence to be used by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Now the former Prime Minister says the President also has secret funds at his disposal.

If these funds had not been available, there would have been no opportunity for any one to indulge in horse-trading. These funds are reported to be more than are earmarked for education by the Federal Government. They were primarily meant to procure information on enemy agents and their actions and planning. But during the martial law regime of Gen Ziaul Haq, these funds increased manifold and were used for infiltrating agents into the political parties, creating dissension among them, organising surveillance over political leaders and workers, setting up ethnic and regional groups, and so on. It was reported in the Press after the Bahawalpur air crash that our agency had some 200,000 people in its regular pay in Pakistan who had infiltrated all political parties, trade unions and social organisations. This was being done when Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan was Finance Minister.

Allegations

How these funds were used is not public knowledge but allegations of a very serious nature have been publicly made by public leaders and journalists, foreign and local, about the use of these funds on a large scale for influencing domestic politics and purchase of loyalties of public leaders. The book, *Saazishon Ka Dawr*, published recently by a senior journalist, Azhar Suhail, (and reviewed in this journal last week), quotes a former Federal Minister, Nisar Mohammad Khan, as having told the author that Gen Zia gave Rs 4 billion to the four Chief Ministers to buy over members of the Muslim League in the dismissed Junejo Assembly to bring that

organisation under the control of Mr Nawaz Sharif and Gen Fazle Haq. Obviously, if the allegation is correct, the funds must have come from some secret source.

A former Governor of Sindh, Nawab Qadeeruddin, disclosed at a recent seminar that the Sindh Government had been financing, during the days of Gen Zia, an urban-based ethnic organisation. This was confirmed at the same seminar by the Vice-Chancellor of Balochistan University, on the authority of a former Chief Minister of Sindh. Such has been the use of these secret funds.

Because of the partisan handling of the accountability process, the prosecution of Benazir Bhutto and her colleagues is not having any impact on the public morality of the leaders. The sons and brothers of the Care-takers have started making the rounds of offices where opportunities of making hay during the short period of sunshine exist. Is it not surprising that the Cabinet Secretariat had to bring out a circular within a month of the new arrangement, warning Government officials not to deal with Jam Salim Ali, who is a stepson of Jam Sadiq Ali "who is using the Chief Minister's name in the Ministries/Divisions and autonomous bodies for irregular gain"? When allegations of a graver nature against IJI leaders than those preferred against the PPP leaders are being ignored by those now in control, the references would have no deterrent effect and would not contribute to public morality and probity in government. They would only help promote conformity, submission and flunkeyism.

An overdraft of Rs 3,000 million in one month by the Care-taker Punjab cabinet against the entitlement of only Rs 60 million, as alleged by Air Marshal Asghar Khan, if correct, should be seen as the height of irregularity. It is surprising that the State Bank itself appears to have become a party to this irregularity, instead of using its authority to uphold the law and regulations.

Politically Futile

The whole exercise of 6 August thus seems to have been rendered politically futile as a result of the President's subsequent actions. The new Assembly will not be any different from the one dissolved, and horse-trading may be done on a larger scale for lack of discipline among the disparate political groupings—if a little more cautiously and with the blessings of the powers that be as was done in Balochistan where, out of the 23 members of the ruling party, 21 were made Ministers and which was not considered horse-trading by the President. According to the Press reports horse-trading is being done in FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas], under the direct jurisdiction of the President, where votes are being purchased openly in the present election. The one-sided accountability can only result in the erode of confidence in the judicial processes and make a martyr of the one intended to be shown as a villain.

Article Views 'Learning To Live Without American Aid'

91AS0117B Lahore VIEWPOINT in English
18 Oct 90 pp 7-8

[Text] Suspension of U.S. military aid—and economic assistance—should, in the long term, be seen by Pakistan as an undisguised blessing; for nothing has encouraged the erosion of democracy, perverted Pakistan's foreign policy and distorted its relations with its neighbours and natural allies so much as a lure of American guns and dollars.

Since 1954, Pakistan's rulers have been driven by easily avoidable compulsions to accept for Pakistan the status of an American protectorate, a partner in its crusade against Communism. They shut their eyes to the fact that the two Communist giants in Pakistan's immediate neighbourhood could always have been our friends, as was proved later. The tinpot dictators and petty bureaucrats obviously wanted Pakistan to join the Western Alliance in order to protect their own personal and sectional interests, thereby surrendering national sovereignty and Pakistan's freedom of action.

Why Now?

The latest stoppage of U.S. aid has come rather suddenly, and, as always, at a critical time. With a bunch of nominated Care-takers in office, Pakistan's reaction has been muted and confused. The Establishment will have to take appropriate measures to deal with the situation, and make necessary policy adjustments in all spheres. Washington's decision will certainly reduce its credibility as a reliable friend in the public mind. However, it is obvious that inter-State relations cannot be judged in terms of friendship and loyalty. America's volte-face should not have caused much surprise in view of the changes in the global and regional situations, and its domestic compulsions.

U.S. Administration spokesmen have said that the President can no longer certify that Pakistan's nuclear policy rules out the fabrication of an atomic weapon. What they really mean is that in the past American Presidents annually gave Pakistan a false certificate for various other reasons. It is presumably no longer expedient to do so, mainly because the Soviets have left Afghanistan. The supposed threat from the north has disappeared. As for any other threat on Pakistan's borders, that has never been America's concern.

Further, a rumble of discontent with Pakistan is heard in the U.S. Congress and Government circles, because of the manner in which President Ishaq considered it proper to dismiss the elected Government and disband the Assemblies. Opinion in America, as elsewhere in the world, is not satisfied that the selective accountability for alleged corruption conforms to due process or that the elections will be conducted fairly. Such deep American concern for democracy has caused general surprise, and deep resentment among the Care-takers. This seems to

be a recent phenomenon, because American Presidents have in the past been quite happy to consort with dictators and kings as long as their countries could serve American interests.

Observers find it a trifle amusing that America's most loyal friends in Pakistan are beginning to discover that Washington has double standards or that it is wont to interfere in the domestic affairs of countries where governments tolerate viceregal pronouncements by U.S. envoys and accept direction and advice from a variety of U.S. agencies. Strangely, the noisy protest of elements known to be U.S. proteges is about recent American declarations favouring consolidation of the democratic process in Pakistan; of course, they were quite happy when Washington helped and guided their patron and raised no objection to Zia's dictatorial rule.

Some overly optimistic American commentators claim that in a transformed world, U.S. foreign policy is also changing. If this is true and Washington will henceforth seek the co-operation of representative governments and not set up arrangements with the Ziaul Haqs, Pinochets and Noriegas of this world, it will be seen as a happy development, good for America and the rest of the world. But one may have to wait a long time for confirmation of this change.

Pak-U.S. Relations

As for Pakistan's future relations with America, any government in Islamabad must begin to think seriously of learning to live without American aid and revise its policies accordingly. The price paid for America's billions has been heavy and can be seen in the mess in which the country finds itself; the gains are not so easy to discern. No single party can by itself acquire the capacity and courage to take decisions that will allow Pakistan to get out of its debt trap, or the various other complications created during the Zia era, and least of all the weak government that is likely to be born after the 24 October polls. The remedies are there, but their application will require a herculean national effort, and this can be made only if the country's serious political parties can put their heads together to find solutions and join hands to implement them.

As for the deepening economic crisis, a conference of the country's younger economists, without being afflicted with bureaucratic control, should be asked to fabricate a design for the future; this may help the Government to devise a plan that will save the country from bankruptcy.

Commentary Examines Pakistani-U.S. Relations, Strategic Concerns

*91AS0117E Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
19 Oct 90 pp 4, 9*

[Commentary by Mohammad Qayum]

[Text] The geographical position of Pakistan, together with the so far insoluble Kashmir tangle inherited from

an iniquitous dispensation by the British colonialists, and the pull of the developments in the regional context wrought by the global ambitions of the superpowers like Afghanistan's invasion by Russia and presently the deployment of U.S. forces in the Arabian peninsula, dictate conflicting requirements telling upon the defence needs of this politically unstable country. Over the decades of its existence, its rulers, who unfortunately were seldom representative of the will of the nation, committed the country to meet the strategic perceptions of the United States. It was first made a member of the defunct Baghdad Pact; comprising Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, but Iraq was soon taken out by Brigadier Qasim when he overthrew the regime of King Faisal the second. The next rendezvous we made with Pentagon was CENTO [Central Treaty Organization] and a little later we became members of a seven-member defence arrangement under SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization]. All these pacts were directed at the 'containment' of communism to help the United States dictate terms to USSR and China. In the bargain, Pakistan received some military assistance and PL-480 to humour our men in arms and prevent the development of our agriculture to feed our people. Thus our dependence increased proportionate to the U.S. strategic goals. In fact, our leadership was so enamoured with the United States that it displayed uncalled for eagerness to be subservient to Pentagon's directions. An example of this is found from the declassified U.S. foreign policy documents, which have reproduced the following. It is from Hildreth, U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, to the State Department. It is dated 10 July 1954, and reads, "Gen Ayub and his associates have looked to the 'senior partner, the United States for guidance and instructions...they asked to be assigned a role...the United States has not outlined to the military its strategic concept for the area in which the armed forces of Pakistan are to play their part..." Now this is some dependence on others for our strategic thinking!

It was this position taken by our civil-military bureaucracy which ultimately led to the military take-over in '58. And because of this the CIA managed to find almost a permanent say in our affairs. Pakistan's membership of CENTO and SEATO was related to its two geographical units, strategically linked to USSR and China, respectively. While the United States viewed these two units as a facility for their regional and global designs, Pakistani military commanders had more than often stated that the two wings of the country were interdependent in defence matters and that the defence of the erstwhile East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan (now Pakistan). This fallacious thinking was debunked and effectively exposed in 1965, when the Bengalis felt undefended and isolated. Of course, the United States did not care, in spite of SEATO or CENTO connections. Moreover, the United States blocked all aid to Pakistan as a gesture of good-will to India. The result of this was a military stalemate, and the Tashkent capitulation by Pakistan under Kosygin, the Russian premier proved a catalyst for the separation of the Eastern wing from Pakistan. It also

gave cause for the people to revolt against the military regime of Gen Ayub. But before he could be ousted, a great deal of political destabilisation ensued.

The Bengalis came openly in support of Sheikh Mujeebur-Rehman's Six Point with the result that a case of conspiracy, popularly labelled 'the Agartala conspiracy' was instituted against Sheikh Mujeeb, which ended in his release on political considerations perhaps at the behest of the CIA. The Sheikh was in the pay of Alfa Insurance Company, partly owned by the Haroons of Karachi. He was paid something like Rs [rupees] 4000/ per month as honorarium to sustain him as political maverick to be used against the Western wing as a pressure group. This eventually gave him enough popular base to challenge the establishment seriously. But the U.S. attitude in the '65 War had not come about suddenly; it was the result of our tilt towards China and the signing of the Sino-Pak border agreement which had angered India; and, of course, had cast heavy shadows over Pakistan's reliability as a bait to be dangled before India in the strategic game the United States was playing in the region. Pakistan having experienced a let-down by the United States in the aftermath of the Sino-Indo war of 1962, when under the State Department assurances that, if Pakistan remained neutral in the war and did not attack India to recover Kashmir, the United States will, after the hostilities had ceased, bring about a favourable settlement between India and Pakistan. This of course, did not happen. And yet, except for the border agreement with China, the Pakistan leadership failed to learn to read into the deeper Western designs, and the limitations suffered by this country in over-trusting the West vis-a-vis their interests link with Russia.

On the other hand, India having been worsted by China, developed stronger links with Russia without weakening her friendship with the West. She exploited her economic linkage with the Western investors in a manner to benefit from both the power blocs. We, against all normal strategic considerations, did not diversify our relationship and foolishly remained attached to the apron-strings of Pentagon as though nothing had happened despite the U.S. attitude in '65. The tragedy of '71 could have been avoided if the country had an elected and democratic government. But as we know the people at the helms of affairs were the same who had always in some way or the other been associated with formulating policies with the blessings of the CIA. In fact, the regime that followed this greatest national dishonour too had to depend on this expediency of advice and guidance from the bureaucracy, which had been conditioned by elements serving U.S. strategic interests. However, when the civilian government of post-71 episode tried to evolve a degree of independence in attempting to acquire nuclear capability of a limited nature and establish armament complexes for the assembling of small aircraft and rebuild factory for tanks, etc., the U.S. administration came down strongly on Pakistan and went to the extent of threatening its leadership with serious consequences, even to make a 'horrible example' of the

national leaders if they persisted in the pursuit of such ventures to make Pakistan self-sufficient in these fields. Obviously, the strategic interests of the United States cannot permit that to a Third World nation and that also if it happens to profess an ideological nexus of Islam. It is the dependence of nations on the United States for their security and economic existence which alone can serve the long-range U.S. strategic goals in a given area of its interest. Anyone trying to break out of this hold is bound to be subjected to instability and economic sufferings. And to ensure her grip over the destiny of such dependent States, there are peculiar laws especially enacted by the Congress to pressurise these countries, whenever it is necessary to bring home to them their precarious situation, and thus twist them to keep in line as desired by the State Department. The periodic stoppage of aid to Pakistan on flimsy grounds, and then relaxing the very rules after achieving the desired concessions, is a matter we are now well acquainted with. And it is this abject surrender by our policy makers which cuts deeply against our strategic interests as a sovereign country. But for this dependence we would not be taken for granted by U.S. ambassadors in our internal and external dealings. Also to be told by an ambassador how to run our country and who should be our prime minister or to be frequently subjected to inquiries with regards to our scientific developments.

Somehow it is the developed country which in order to retain its superiority is apt to controlling the aspirations of the less developed nations, especially of States who happen to depend on it. This was the case with Russia in her relations with her communist partner, China. But when Khrushchev became overbearing in the early Sixties, Mr Chou-en-Lai, the Chinese Premier, decided to do without the Russian assistance and become a self-reliant nation. The Chinese people accepted the challenge; and China exploded her first atomic device in 1964, only four years after the stoppage of Russian aid. The Chinese could do this because they had devoted leaders, and no feudals or Western-oriented bureaucracy to misguide them into permanent dependence on others. And recently again after their taste of U.S. technological assistance, when they discovered that the United States was linking her technology with the Chinese internal political affairs, the Chinese refused to receive any further assistance. The so-called riots, engineered by U.S. tourists and experts who had come with the aid, were suppressed, and the United States told to mind her business, albeit it gave a chance to the West to indulge in provocative anti-China propaganda, labelling her as being anti-democratic, etc. But this had no effect on the Chinese leadership who prefer to depend on their own resources even if it may cause temporary set-backs and economic hardship. For national pride and sovereignty are more important than eating a highly butter-saturated meal provided by someone else. Surely, the pride of a nation lies in being able to manage its own affairs without undue interference from others. Self-respect demands that a people who call themselves free and independent should not remain at the mercy of powers

who are basically against the very basis of their existence. Pakistan being an Islamic State can ill-afford to allow anti-Islamic powers to tamper with its basic values through aid or any other arrangement. Considering the experience of China, and some other self-respecting peoples, we must rethink our relations with the United States. And now that she has for the umpteenth time tried to brow-beat us for what we as a free people wish to pursue in the nuclear field, she has given us a God-sent opportunity to refuse to have any aid from her. As Muslims we must abide by the well-known saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that "A Momin does not fall into the same hole twice." We have trusted the United States again and again despite her repeated betrayals at crucial times of our existence.

Let us trust ourselves and live a hard existence and acquire self-reliance. For not to do so we will never become a truly free people.

The Americans can find some other catspaws to serve their strategic aims, especially now that the Afghanistan imbroglio no longer remains their primary game of power politics. The USSR is now an American friend if not a protege of some magnitude. Before concluding it might be necessary to pose a question to our policy makers and it is: what advantages have accrued to Pakistan from our abject dependence upon the United States, have we been able to resolve any of our problems, viz; Kashmir, economic viability, or assured security and development of industry? The answer to this intangible puzzle is provided by the socio-political confusion prevalent in the milieu. The Afghan issue has further compounded our security and economy, something that suits the United States to keep us in partial bondage. These are then our strategic dilemmas needing urgent pondering by those pretending to be rulers of this highly mismanaged country. The longer we depend on foreign props the worse will become the chances of a free existence of our posterity. Let us save it from a servile existence.

Commentary Outlines Remedies to Reduced U.S. Aid

*91AS0117D Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
19 Oct 90 p 4*

[Commentary by Farhatullah Babar]

[Text] A letter written by 53 U.S. Senators to President Bush on 8 October urges him to inform Pakistan that "Pak-U.S. relations will take a severe turn for the worse," meaning that U.S. economic and military assistance will cease if Islamabad failed to hold free and fair elections in a timely manner.

Earlier, on 19 September, Congressman Solarz, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, also in a letter urged President Bush to end aid to Pakistan because of its allegedly continued attempts to develop nuclear weapons.

For his part, President Bush has withheld the certification, due by 1 October, that Pakistan was not pursuing a weapons-oriented nuclear programme. The certificate under a curious Pakistan-specific law called Presseler Amendment, is necessary for continued U.S. economic and military assistance. As a result, U.S. economic and military assistance to Pakistan has been suspended.

Last month the IMF also stopped disbursement of 240 million dollars out of its total aid of 850 million dollars to Pakistan, because of the latter's refusal to increase petrol prices and to decrease subsidies on some essential items.

The letter by 53 U.S. Senators introduces a new factor in the linkages to the American aid to this country. So far, the aid was conditioned by the donors either on the restructuring of Pakistan's economy or on its nuclear programme. But neither had presented any major problem.

In asking for a restructuring of Pakistan's economy the donors have in effect been demanding that Pakistan keep its budget deficit at less than 7 percent. It was up to us to achieve it either by levying new taxes or by cutting expenditure. Indeed, our Five-Year Plan has even been more candid than many foreign donors by advocating broadening of the tax base, resource mobilisation and cutting back deficit.

Differences of perception on the nuclear issue also have not been unsurmountable so far. After all, successive U.S. administrations from President Reagan to Bush have been issuing the required certificate year after year, the last time in November 1989.

One of the reasons for Pakistan to withstand U.S. pressures against the country's nuclear programme has been the bipartisan support and national consensus enjoyed by it. Realizing this, Washington now appears to bracket bomb with democracy to lend moral facade to Pakistan-bashing which it has failed to do for reasons of bomb alone. This is a new device and calls for serious rethinking on how to extricate ourselves from blackmailing by aid givers.

Two things must be clearly understood. First, that foreign aid is not given out of any altruistic considerations. Aid is essentially an instrument of foreign policy to advance primarily the interests and objectives of aid givers.

Thus when Pakistan's services were needed as a 'front line state' in containing USSR in Afghanistan, no Symington or Presseler Law stood in the way of extending economic and military assistance to this country. And it is because of the aid giver's self-serving interests that the nuclear programmes of some other aid receiving countries, notably India and Israel, are not only tolerated but actually abetted.

Second, we must remember that in the decade of the 90s the divergence in the perceptions of Pakistan and the United States on the nuclear issue is likely to widen.

In the decade that has just ended, nuclear matters were pushed aside by the U.S. concern to contain Soviets in Afghanistan. In the 90s however, because of the formal demise of the Cold War, the near abdication of Moscow of its global role, and a growing Washington-Moscow understanding on arms limitation, particularly nuclear, Washington is likely to move up the nuclear issue along its list of priorities. Perhaps, this explains the rumours taking round in Islamabad that Washington has asked Pakistan to open up its Kahuta laboratories for inspection by Senator Cranston, a demand Islamabad has spurned.

Pakistan must, therefore, learn to reduce its dependence upon foreign economic assistance if it has to keep freedom of choice in vital areas of national policy. This is a long-term goal and can be achieved only gradually. But we have to at least make a conscious beginning in this direction.

The total annual U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan amounts to some 560 million dollars. Apart from other measures that can be taken, merely expanding our exports by 10 percent can earn additional 500 million dollars, almost equal to the U.S. aid. But what are other measures which can be taken?

There are at least two areas which can generate additional resources. First, reducing tax evasion. According to former Finance Minister Dr Mahboobul Haq, 30 to 50 billion rupees in income tax are evaded every year, let alone the evasion of other taxes. It is a myth that our taxation system is based on one's ability to pay. On the contrary, it is based on the premise that he who cannot escape from its payment must pay the tax.

In a country where the annual growth rate of black money out-performs inflation, and where the sum total of kickbacks and 'bakhshesh' money is almost as high as the defence budget (Rs [rupees] 65 billion), it should not be difficult to visualize the potential of improved tax collection in meeting the aid-cut threat.

And, secondly, the tax base can be broadened by taxing agriculture income. The argument that since the agriculturist pays land revenue he should be exempt from income tax, amounts to saying that an urban property-holder should not pay income tax on rent because he pays the property tax! The argument that prices of crops are controlled also does not hold much water. Tax is on the income, and if prices of wheat, cotton and rice are fixed, it provides no justification for not taxing income from agricultural produce.

It is a pity that while the Gulf crisis has confronted the world with a major economic challenge, Pakistan's second general elections in as many years, are singularly devoid of any debate on economic issue, and the internal house is in disorder and divided. It is time that both the

IJI [Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad] and PDA [People's Democratic Alliance] told the nation how they planned to extricate the country from too heavy a dependence on foreign assistance and to preserve our policy options.

Editorial Criticizes Electoral Process, Stresses Vox Populi

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[Editorial: "Let the People Speak"]

[Text] With necessary guidance from past experience, it should not be difficult for all concerned and thinking citizens to look beyond the polluted dust and acrid smoke that hang over the political arena and see what really is at stake in the 24-27 October electoral contest. The political debate—what little of it can be heard in the continuing torrent of personal abuse, slander and mean innuendo—is limited mostly to the controversial Presidential Order of 6 August 1990, which dissolved the Assemblies elected less than two years ago and dismissed governments that had enjoyed the confidence and support of the legislatures. Party policies and manifestoes have been presented but these documents are not taken seriously, being regarded generally as extravagant but vague promises thrown at audiences in the hope of catching the ear of the more gullible voters. The validity of President Ghulam Ishaq's Order will presumably be determined finally by Pakistan's highest court of law, but its political propriety has been contested by almost everyone except the direct beneficiaries of the unusual decision to dismantle the quasi-democratic set-up and hand over authority to the Care-takers, with no restrictions on their ill-concealed intent to take care of their own and harm their political enemies. The election itself is expected to give the people's verdict on the Presidential Order.

Most political parties whose leaders enjoy some standing in the country, including many that were part of the COP-IJI [Combined Opposition Parties-Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad] combine, have criticized the dissolution of the Assemblies and even more the Care-takers' dubious role and the one-sided process of accountability. The arrest and harassment of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] leaders and supporters, particularly in Sindh and Balochistan, has not added to the interim administration's reputation for fairplay and decency. Government spokesmen and the controlled or favoured media have made much of the rampant corruption that was allegedly responsible for inviting the Presidential fiat dismissing the Bhutto regime. The charges of favouritism and nepotism, amounting to political corruption, have not impressed the people greatly. First, the allegations have yet to be proved. Secondly, corruption and ineptness have been common denominators of all regimes that have ruled Pakistan over the years—with or without popular sanction. It is widely accepted that the 11 years of the Zia era were no exception. In fact, this period was in many ways worse than others because it introduced

non-party polls and the commercialisation of elections. What makes the present anti-Bhutto campaign even more suspect is that it is palpably interfering with the PPP's election campaign. Most people believe that this party's sagging popularity graph has gone up steadily as a result of its being unfairly persecuted and the Care-taker's crude tactics and dirty tricks. Due process is often ignored, and administrative measures get harsher and more discriminatory with every passing day. Until the High Courts reach final verdicts on the many writ petitions before them and the criminal cases filed before Special Tribunals against former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, her Ministers and her relations have been decided, it is difficult to predict the outcome and consequences of the many-sided legal battle, particularly since the tribunals have been given the power to short-circuit the people's verdict by disqualifying any candidate held by them to be guilty of the offences for which the Special Courts have been set up.

The charges of corruption and maladministration against the PPP Governments are further weakened in the public eye because other ruling parties, in office before or after December 1988, have been spared all accountability, and the Care-takers seem to believe that they are not bound by any rules of law or ethical considerations, not even the guide-lines given by the Lahore High Court last year for care-taker governments. For example, the manner in which Government officials have been shuffled around in order to place IJI's friends in important positions, and the lack of scruple with which public funds have been placed at the disposal of IJI candidates, certainly put IJI stone-throwers in brittle glass-houses. The discrimination being exercised by the administration everywhere against the PPP and its PDA [People's Democratic Alliance] allies does not strengthen the interim regime's claims to impartiality or add to its reputation for honesty. Nor is it a secret that the Care-takers have been engaged sedulously in preparing bogus identity cards and special voters' lists which contain many ghost names, with the intention of bringing extra votes to IJI nominees. Then, Care-taker leaders have begun to say, no longer in snide whispers but loudly in public, that even if the IJI loses and the PPP wins, Benazir Bhutto will not be permitted to return to power. What does this mean?

Remembering Pakistan's history, particularly the events of the last 13 years, there can be no honest doubt that the political battle in which the people are engaged is primarily against those who have always sought to limit and control democracy, and deny to our people the freedoms they have always cherished and sought but have seldom enjoyed. The struggle against the defenders of the status quo should, therefore, be seen as being above the level of a scramble for power among political parties or factions, and viewed as a movement deserving the support of all those who believe that the people have certain inalienable rights and also realise that these basic human rights are under threat. The Care-takers' coalition can be seen to be dominated by political dinosaurs, friends of a

variety of dictators who possessed one common factor, namely, that they had no faith in democracy and still less confidence in the people of Pakistan. The October contest should, therefore, be seen in its proper historical perspective. All those who can influence voters and guide the people should not surrender to cynicism born of frustration which makes them call for a plague-on-both-your-houses. This abdication of civic responsibility betrays a lack of faith in the country's future. They must have confidence in the people's capacity to choose between right and wrong, and believe that given full freedom the people will choose wisely and well; and if they make mistakes they can and will correct themselves next time. The important point is that the people must be guided to vote for political principles—and hence only for political parties pledged to democracy.

Plainly, whatever the differences over the causes that have brought Pakistan to its present pass, there is ostensible agreement on the best—the only—solution for our political ills, namely, a genuine reference to the people. Therefore, all those responsible for creating the current situation, including the President, his political supporters, the bureaucracy, and in a remoter sense the judiciary and armed forces, bear a certain responsibility. Their responsibility is not to try to guide the people towards results considered positive, but to ensure clean honest results that will be accepted by our people. Since this is the agreed objective of all political elements in the country, including those who wield authority and the main Opposition groups, they must all help to create conditions that will allow a fair and impartial election. This means, above all, that there must be no interference with the people's right to vote; no attempt should be made to disrupt the polls; law and order must be maintained and the use of Kalashnikovs barred effectively—without discrimination. Apart from other authorities, this responsibility vests in the Election Commission, which enjoys considerable powers and is bound by law and morality to ensure that in every constituency in the land the people are allowed to choose their representatives freely. This responsibility is shared by all who claim to be democrats; however the people vote, they must respect the people's free verdict, so that this country can rid itself of seasonal political storms and begin to move forward towards its destiny. Its destiny was never meant to be eternal political turmoil and attendant social unrest, continued deprivation for the people, and chronic exploitation by small groups desperately hanging on to power by fair means or foul. Genuine democracy must be established, consolidated and guaranteed; only then can we hope that Pakistan will overcome the retardation of its first four decades and progress towards stable peace and prosperity.

To achieve this, everyone must agree to let the people speak. Let them speak freely, without fear of retaliatory victimisation. Let them vote without risk of inviting

God's wrath. Let them use their sacred right to vote without the pressure of the lambardars or other Government agents or managers of vote banks who then bargain with candidates. Let them choose their representatives on merit without the lure of money or the influence of baradari or kinship or caste or sect. Honest citizens should plead with the people to allow their political conscience to guide them on voting day. Only in this way is it possible to make elections a worthwhile political

exercise. This process will help to weed out the political predators and give this country a chance to survive, to grow and develop under a leadership chosen by the people and accountable to them for its deeds or misdeeds. All who hold power or exercise political influence must agree to let the people speak—and heed their voice. Vox populi at least reflects the nation's collective wisdom, and no individual or group has the right to override the freely-expressed will of the people.