

Egypt Invades Libya

As Sadat Position Crumbles

Egyptian armed units, including parachutists and tank brigades, made several incursions into Libyan territory July 21 and 22, including a July 22 bombing of the Gamal Abdel Nasser airfield in Tobruk, Libya, approximately 120 kilometers deep into Libyan territory. This, the worst episode in the history of the two countries' strained relations, was accompanied by a demagogic speech in Cairo by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. In commemoration, ironically, of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coup which toppled obese dictator Egyptian King Farouk and brought the nationalist Gamal Abdel Nasser into power in 1952, Sadat boasted, "We have taught (Libyan leader) Qaddafi a lesson" for ostensibly having provoked a border incident between the two countries earlier in the week.

Early assessments from Washington indicate that the clashes could rapidly escalate into a major crisis in the northeastern Africa tinderbox. According to one State Department source, "It could be only summer madness.... But remember Sarajevo" — the incident that triggered World War One. The likelihood of such a crisis occurring would expand dramatically if it were discovered authoritatively that Sadat had been "put up to" the attack on oil-rich Libya by either National Security Council head Zbigniew Brzezinski and other U.S.-based sources or by French President Giscard d'Estaing. Early June 21 French national radio reports portrayed the Egyptian attacks as the beginning of an "Anschluss" of Libyan territory by Egypt and noted that an earmark of the Mideast policy of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had been to encourage an Egyptian takeover of Libya. A former U.S. ambassador to the Mideast corroborated that Kissinger had in fact pursued such a policy.

Notably, Jacob Javits, Senator from New York and prime Capitol Hill advocate of a policy of "smashing OPEC," the oil-producers' cartel, was in Egypt last week meeting with Sadat.

Qaddafi — Scapegoat for Sadat

The attacks on Libya occur in the midst of a situation that is rapidly becoming unmanageable for Sadat internally in Egypt. More than one source has intimated

that Sadat is using Qaddafi as a "foreign devil" to get the heat off himself from dissident army and political factions within Egypt. Sadat's susceptibility to such maneuvers can only increase as the pressure on him from the U.S. and Israel to abandon the Palestine Liberation Organization and an independent Palestinian state intensifies; it is common knowledge that Sadat could not survive what would universally be considered a betrayal of fundamental Egyptian foreign policy tenets.

At a meeting of Egypt's ruling Arab Socialist Union 475 member Central Committee last weekend, Sadat was subjected to extremely harsh criticism. When outlining his pro-U.S. policies, he was so heckled that Egyptian state radio had to turn off the microphones of Sadat detractors and turn up the volume on Sadat supporters! A leading ideological follower of Nasser, Kamal Ahmed, charged Sadat with abandoning Nasserism and Egypt's traditional friendship with the Soviet Union and with resurrecting the state security apparatus in order to quash the "popular uprising" of January of this year. These charges reportedly flabbergasted Sadat, who helplessly blurted, "That was no popular uprising. Those were common thieves, just like those who rioted during New York's blackout last week!"

According to an Arab banker in New York, "Sadat was almost openly called an American puppet, and that is unprecedented for Egypt... Things are falling apart all around Sadat," he continued, "this is the worst situation Egypt's been in in 25 years, even worse than after the June 1967 war, when at least there was a feeling of internal order and stability."

The banking source concluded that he expected the army — "the only viable political entity in the country" — to make the "next move" domestically. He estimated that the Libyan incident would be used as a "diversion" by Sadat, since it would enable him to "keep the Begin visit to the U.S., which was a devastating failure to him, off the front pages of the newspapers for 15 days."

Similar reports of internal unrest in Egypt have been featured in the Israeli press. The July 18 *Jerusalem Post's* lead editorial headlined, "Sadat in Trouble," while the previous day's paper's lead item reported the burgeoning of "Communist and Nasserite cells in the Egyptian army."