

A. JORDAN. — Military Action against Palestinian Guerrillas. - Destruction of Guerrilla Organization in Jordanian Territory. - Reactions in Arab Countries.

Despite the Cairo and Amman agreements which ended the civil war, and the subsequent agreement concluded in October 1970 between King Hussein and Mr. Yassir Arafat, the guerrilla leader [see 24364 A], the first six months of 1971, like the closing weeks of 1970, were marked by continued clashes at frequent intervals between the Jordanian Army and the Palestinian guerrilla forces in Jordan. Eventually, after having secured the withdrawal of armed guerrillas from Amman, the Jordanian Army launched a powerful military offensive in July against the guerrilla forces in northern Jordan—their last strongholds in the country—which was claimed in Amman to have achieved complete success and to have resulted in the destruction of the guerrilla organization in Jordanian territory. It was officially announced in Amman on July 19 that no more guerrilla bases remained in Jordan and that, of a total of 2,500 Palestinian guerrillas in the country, all but 200 had been rounded up. Developments since the beginning of 1971 are summarized below.

During Jan. 7-14 fighting occurred in parts of northern Jordan, and also in Amman, between the Royal Jordanian Army and the Palestinian commandos. While the guerrillas accused the Army of attacking commando bases in northern Jordan with tanks and artillery, a Government spokesman in Amman said that the outbreak of fighting was the result of a "series of aggressions" by guerrillas in which a soldier had been killed and two others kidnapped in separate incidents. During the operations in the north, of which few details were made public, 384 foreign guerrillas—nearly all Syrians—were rounded up by the Jordanian Army at the Beqaa* refugee camp and put across the Syrian frontier. A short-lived cease-fire agreement, announced on Jan. 12 but almost immediately broken, was followed by a renewal of fighting in parts of Amman and in the north on Jan. 13-14, but on the latter date peace was temporarily restored when the Government and the guerrillas announced an agreement which, it was stated, was designed to remove all causes of friction.

Signed by Mr. Wasfi Tell, the Jordanian Prime Minister, and Mr. Ibrahim Bakr, for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the agreement contained the following principal provisions: (1) The guerrillas would withdraw to bases outside cities and towns, and the Government would release all detainees; (2) arms in the hands of the Government-sponsored Popular Resistance Front and of the guerrilla militia would be collected during the following nine days and stored in specific places; (3) only the commander of the Popular Resistance Front and the central committee of the PLO could authorize the redistribution of weapons; (4) the Government would return weapons seized from guerrillas and carry out an investigation of road checkpoints to ensure that the guerrillas had freedom of movement and were treated correctly; (5) it would also hand back the offices of the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (the military wing of the PLO) at Ramtha, near the Syrian border, which had been seized during the civil war. This agreement—the fourth concluded between the Government and the guerrillas since the ending of the civil war—was accepted by all the commando organizations except the extreme left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFPL) and the Democratic Front, a small group.

For nearly a month there was an uneasy peace, marked by reconciliations between the different Palestinian Arab guerrilla organizations. Dr. Habash, the leader of the PFPL, in an interview on Jan. 16 to the Lebanese newspaper *Al Nihar*, accused the Jordanian authorities of having determined to "liquidate" the Palestine resistance, and called for the overthrow of King Hussein and his "reactionary" Government and its replacement by a "popular and progressive" regime. Mr. Kamal Adwan, one of the leaders of *11 Fatah* and its official spokesman, denounced Dr. Habash on Jan. 17 as an "adventurer" who, he said, had "double-crossed" the Palestinian resistance movement and had gone into hiding in North Korea during the Jordanian civil war.

Fighting again erupted in Amman on Feb. 11-16 between Government forces and guerrillas, each side accusing the other of responsibility; its origins were obscure but it was believed to have originated when Government forces moved into a guerrilla-controlled area to seize arms which were being accumulated in violation of earlier cease-fire agreements. Some six weeks later, during the last week of March another and more serious outbreak of fighting occurred in the Irbid area in northern Jordan, casualties being reported as more than 50 killed and wounded. As in earlier outbreaks, the guerrillas accused the Government of responsibility, whilst Government statements said that the guerrillas had attacked a police post at Irbid and that a large arms cache, including anti-tank and anti-personnel mines and 34 rockets, had been seized by Government forces in a cemetery which the guerrillas had been using as an arms hide-out. In another incident on April 2 guerrillas operating near Zerqa blew up the pipeline carrying Jordan's sole supply of crude oil; the pipeline was repaired the following day, however.

During the first week of April a wave of intensified guerrilla activity was reported from the northern part of the country, including an attack by more than 200 guerrillas, with rockets and mortars, on Army positions near Ajlun and Jerash, and a mortar attack on Mafrak in north-east Jordan. In the capital, however, the situation was greatly eased when the central committee of the PLO agreed on

April 4 that all commandos should withdraw from Amman with their weapons. During the next 10 days lorryloads of commandos left the capital, and by April 14 it was officially announced that all guerrillas and heavy weapons had left Amman—described by Mr. Wasfi Tell as a "positive and decisive" development. Troops carried out searches of the Wahdat refugee camp and other former commando strongholds to ensure that there were no hidden arms caches. The guerrillas' evacuation of Amman followed several strongly-worded statements by King Hussein in which he reiterated the Government's determination to restore its authority in the capital and in the country; in a statement on April 6—his third in four days—the King emphasized that, while his Government adhered to the Cairo and Amman agreements that ended the civil war, it would "not bargain at the expense of our nation and country".

Another development during this period which at the time gave promise of easing the situation was the decision of the Jordanian and Syrian Governments and of the central committee of the PLO to set up a six-man committee to supervise peace agreements between the commandos and the Jordanian forces. The agreement, announced in Damascus on April 9, followed a visit to Jordan by the Syrian Army Chief of Staff, Major-General Mustafa Tlas, who headed a special Syrian mediation team which had talks in Amman with King Hussein, Jordanian Ministers and PLO representatives. General Tlas said after his return to Damascus that this committee would comprise a Jordanian and a Syrian Cabinet Minister, two high-ranking Army officers, one Jordanian and one Syrian, and two representatives appointed by the PLO central committee.

The next six or seven weeks were comparatively quiescent, but during the last few days of May there was a recurrence of commando activity which included an attack on a phosphates factory at Ruseifa, north-east of Amman, and on installations and farms in northern Jordan. A Government spokesman issued a statement on May 31 accusing the guerrillas of starting a sabotage campaign aimed at overthrowing King Hussein and the Jordanian State; he said that this campaign was designed to undermine the nation's economic life and to provoke the Army into military action, and thereby to create the impression abroad that the Government were determined to "massacre" the Palestinian resistance. In recent days, the spokesman added, the *fedayeen* had attacked phosphate mines and other installations, burned private farms and kidnapped a number of civilians in different villages.

In a directive to his Prime Minister, broadcast on June 2 by Amman Radio, King Hussein ordered "bold and tough action against the handful of professional criminals and conspirators who use the commando movement to disguise their treasonable acts". Accusing guerrilla leaders of plotting to set up a separate Palestinian State and "to grab power at any cost", the King said that there should be "no hesitation, compromise or tolerance in dealing with them". In his reply, Mr. Wasfi Tell said that the Government intended to carry out the King's orders to the letter and that they would punish those "who commit crimes in the name of commando action".

On July 13 the Beirut headquarters of the Palestine guerrillas announced that the Jordanian Army had launched a powerful offensive with tanks, artillery and shock troops against commando positions in northern Jordan, notably in the Jerash and Ajlun areas, as well as in the lowlands near the Israeli frontier; heavy fighting was said to be in progress, and the Jordanian forces were accused of having launched the offensive with the aim of "liquidating" the Palestinian resistance. No immediate statement on the operations was made in Amman, but on July 14 a Government spokesman said that the Jordanian Army had dislodged guerrilla units from populated places in northern Jordan after they had refused to leave inhabited areas voluntarily. The spokesman said that for the past month commandos in the Jerash area had made repeated attacks on farms and villages with rockets, mortars and machine-guns "as part of a sinister plan to destroy the national economy", preventing the farmers from harvesting their crops, and planting fields with mines which had destroyed a number of tractors and other vehicles.

By July 15 the guerrillas had been ejected from all inhabited localities in northern Jordan, the Army having established control of the towns of Jerash and Ajlun and of many villages in the area which were previously controlled by the commandos. It was announced in Amman on July 23 that among guerrillas killed in the military operations was Mr. Abu Iyad, one of the most prominent *Al Fatah* leaders.

Following the defeat of the last organized guerrilla forces in Jordan, between 90 and 100 Palestinian Arab commandos sought and received sanctuary in Israeli-controlled territory. Arriving at the Jordan River, they asked and were given permission to cross to the West Bank, throwing their weapons into the river or handing them to the Israeli authorities, who gave them food and drink. They told the Israelis they had been under constant attack from Jordanian troops, whom they accused of shooting wounded guerrillas and those who surrendered; one of the commandos said they would "rather be prisoners of the Israelis than slaughtered by our brother Arabs".

The Jordanian Prime Minister told a press conference in Amman on July 19 that there were no longer any commando bases in the country and that 2,300 out of a total of 2,500 guerrillas in Jordan had been captured by the Army and taken to a camp near Amman; he expected that most of the other 200 guerrillas not yet rounded up would be found. Those guerrillas who were wanted for crimes or who had demanded the overthrow of the Government would either be gaoled or expelled from the country, but the "true guerrillas who work for

liberation" would be released after screening. Henceforth, however, Mr. Wash Tell added, "we shall not allow anyone not believing in liberation first to operate in this country, and we shall not condone the presence of groups with ideological tendencies

Mr. Wasfi Tell said that for a month before the recent military operation the guerrillas had been attacking Army convoys in northern Jordan and farms in the Jerash and Ajlun areas ; in the 20 days before the operation was mounted the Army had lost 16 dead and 19 wounded through guerrilla action, while in the same period nearly 20 civilians had been killed and over 50 wounded. Scores of people, he added, had been executed by the guerrillas for co-operating with the

The Prime Minister said that "Yassir Aralat, the guerrilla leader, had "formally declared war" on the Jordanian Government by cabling all his bases that he would attack with all his forces stationed on the Jordan-Syria frontier.

Arab Reactions to Destruction of Guerrilla Organization. - Tripoli Meeting of Arab Heads of State.

A number of Arab countries, notably those with leftist regimes, reacted strongly to the destruction of the Palestinian Arab guerrilla organization by the Jordanian Army. Iraq closed its border with Jordan on July 19, demanding the recall of the Jordanian Ambassador from Baghdad and the expulsion of Jordan from the Arab League ; the Libyan leader, Colonel Kadhafi, on July 20 urged armed intervention by the Arab countries against Jordan to save the Palestinian guerrillas ; President Sadat of the U.A.R., in a speech on July 23, described King Hussein as the "butcher" of the Palestinian resistance movement, said that he would "pay dearly for his crimes" and alleged that the United States was "behind him" ; Syria closed its border with Jordan on July 25 in protest against the "liquidation" of the Palestine guerrillas ; and Algeria broke off relations with Jordan on July 29 for the same reason.

Prior to these developments, the Arab military committee appointed after the civil war to supervise the truce between the Jordanian Army and the guerrillas had to all intents and purposes ceased to exist. The Libyan representative on this committee was withdrawn in January and the Egyptian representative in March, while in the latter month the U.A.R. restored broadcasting rights over Cairo Radio to the Palestinian commandos after an eight-month suspension.

M. Bahi Ladgham, the former Prime Minister of Tunisia, resigned on April 13 as head of the supreme supervisory committee set up by the Arab States after the civil war to supervise a settlement between the Jordanian Government and the guerrillas. Accusing Jordan of "patent determination to liquidate the Palestinian resistance in stages" he alleged that King Hussein had never seriously intended to respect the Cairo agreement and said that his committee had never been welcome in Jordan, where it had been considered to be meddling in the country's internal affairs. M. Ladgham added that he was "not appointed to head the Supreme Arab Committee in order to preside over the eradication of the Palestinian resistance" and that he therefore considered his mission to be at an end.

A one-day summit meeting was held in Tripoli (Libya) on July 30, presided over by Colonel Kadhafi as host and attended by four other Arab Heads of State : President Sadat (U.A.R.), President Assad (Syria), President Iriani (Yemen), and Mr. Salem Ali Rubayyi, chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). The Sudanese leader, General al Nemery, was unable to attend the Tripoli meeting owing to the political situation in the Sudan resulting from the abortive left-wing coup which had deposed him for 72 hours [see 24749 A]. Of the other Arab countries invited, Kuwait and Lebanon declined the invitations, while no public response was forthcoming from Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Iraq.

In an ironically-worded message to Colonel Kadhafi, King Hussein thanked him for "your invitation which did not arrive" and noted that the participants in the Tripoli meeting would be discussing his country's affairs in his absence. Emphasizing that Jordan had opened its gates to the Palestinian guerrillas after the Arab-Israel war of 1967, he said that this hospitality had been abused and accused "deviationist" commandos of having violated the Cairo and Amman agreements which ended the civil war.

The Tripoli meeting ended with the publication of a communique, summarized below, strongly condemning Jordan for suppressing the Palestinian resistance movement, and pledging continued assistance to the latter by the countries represented.

The communique said that if it appeared that the Jordanian Government had "decided to reject the letter and spirit of the Cairo and Amman agreements" it would be "the duty of all Arab Governments to take individually and collectively all practical measures necessary to protect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to pursue their legitimate struggle for liberation

After denouncing the Jordanian Government's "bloody measures" and "political manoeuvres to liquidate the Palestinian revolution", the communique said that Jordan's attitude was "in contradiction to the supreme interests of the Arab nation and the natural rights of the Palestinian people". The Arab Heads of State meeting at Tripoli recognized that it was their duty to give "financial, political and military" support to the Palestinian revolution in order that it could continue its struggle on Jordanian soil.

According to *Le Monde*, the Arab Heads of State rejected proposals by Colonel Kadhafi for all Arab countries to sever relations with Jordan, to expel Jordan from the Arab League, to work for the replacement of Mr. Wasfi Tell's Cabinet by a "national democratic government", and, if necessary, for military intervention against the Hashemite Kingdom. Libya, the M^eria, and already Yemen off diplomatic relations with Jordan and, as stated above, Colonel Kadhafi had previously urged military intervention against that country on behalf of the Palestinian guerrillas.

Border Clashes between Jordan and Syria.

Syria broke off relations with Jordan on Aug. 12, a Damascus broadcast saying that this action had been taken after a border clash on the Deraa-Ramtha road in which four Jordanian tanks were claimed to have been destroyed. It was alleged that the Jordanian Army had moved tanks and armoured cars to the border and begun shelling Syrian territory. Further border clashes were reported on Aug. 13, when a Government spokesman in Amman said that "armed men" and "unidentified armour" (phrases usually applied to Palestinian guerrillas) operating from Syrian territory had been carrying out raids against Jordanian border villages for the past week; the spokesman expressed surprise at the "emotional reaction" in Syria to the border incidents, "especially because it came after the command of our armed forces had contacted the leaders of the brotherly Syrian Army calling for an investigation into the regrettable clashes". Syrian claims to have destroyed nine Jordanian tanks on Aug. 12-13 were denied in Amman, where it was stated that the Jordanian Army had suffered no losses and that its forces had returned fire in self-defence.

In an apparent Arab mediatory effort to ease the tension between Syria and Jordan, the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, Mr. Omar Saqqaf, and a personal envoy of President Sadat, Dr. Hassan Sabry el Kholi, visited Jordan on Aug. 13 for talks with King Hussein at Aqaba, where the King was on holiday. Mr. Saqqaf and Dr. el Kholi proceeded on the following day to Damascus, where on Aug. 15 the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Khalil Abu Hamas, also arrived for talks with his Syrian counterpart. It was believed that these discussions were directed not only at easing the tension between Syria and Jordan but also at healing the rift between the Jordanian Government and the Palestinian guerrillas.—(*Le Monde* • *Times* - *Daily Telegraph* - *Guardian* - *New York Times*)

(Prev. rep. Jordan, 24364 A)

A. SOMALIA. — Cabinet Reorganization. - Arrest of High-ranking Officers accused of Plotting against Government.

In a Cabinet reorganization announced by the Supreme Revolutionary Council on July 31 three Vice-Presidents were appointed and three new Ministries created.

The new Vice-Presidents were General Hussein Kulmie Afrah, the Minister of the Interior; Major Ismail Ali Abokor, the Minister of Information ; and Lieut.-Colonel Mohammed Ali Samater, secretary-general of the Supreme Revolutionary Council. Colonel Ahmad Mohammed Farah, previously Minister for both Industry and Commerce, was appointed Minister of Posts and Telecommunications; Colonel Mussa Habibe became Minister of Labour and Sport; and Mr. Mohammed Warsame Ali (previously Minister of Communication and Transport) became Minister of Commerce.

On May 5 it was officially announced that two members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council—General Mohammed Ainarshe Guled, Vice-Chairman of the Council, and General Salad Gavere Kedie, Secretary of State for Public Works—as well as several other military men and some civilians had been arrested for being involved in a plot to overthrow the Government.—(*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* - *Le Monde* - *Corriere della Sera*) (Prev. rep. Cabinet, 24277 A ; Plot foiled, 23083 A)

B. ARGENTINA. — Population.

Provisional figures announced in March 1971 for a population census taken on Sept. 30, 1970, showed the total number of Argentina's inhabitants as 23,360,000 (11,600,000 males and 11,760,000 females), of whom 2,180,000 were born abroad (Bank of London and South America Review)

(Prev. rep. 14114 D)