

Bears armed with the recently installed long-range AS-15 air-launched cruise missile, based in the Baltic States of the U.S.S.R., flew west en masse over the Baltic, then, over the East German island of Rügen, turned sharply to the south-east, and landed at air bases in East Germany and Poland. Defense-related sources insist that the maneuver was not simply an "air defense maneuver" as reported in the press, but, was an exercise designed to ensure "attainment of air supremacy" in a war. Other observers, cited recently in *Die Welt*, are worried that such flights Soviet bombers westward over the Baltic might become an exercise pattern, and lull NATO to sleep with the new "routine." Then, one day, they will fly westward—and not turn back.

Soviet, East German, and Czech ground and air forces are in the midst of big maneuvers in East Germany. An abnormally high percentage of East German territory has been declared off limits to the members of the U.S., French, and British, Allied Military Missions in Potsdam. In the Soviet Union, maneuvers involving 25-50,000 troops plus air units, began on July 6 in the Carpathian Military District. On July 16, large ground and air maneuvers began in the Trans-Caucasian Military District, in Soviet Georgia, and Azerbaijan. They will culminate near the borders of NATO member, Turkey, and also Iran.

Gorbachov inspects the troops

Gorbachov is going out of his way to publicize himself as the General Secretary who is working with and for the military, and for war production. He began on July 11, a publicized tour of the Byelorussian Military District in the western U.S.S.R., bordering on Poland and Lithuania. The Byelorussian Military District contains by far the largest ground and air forces of any Military District in the Western Soviet, if not indeed in the entire Soviet Union, excepting the Far East Military District.

The Commander in Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, General of the Army Ivanovskii, was, from early 1981 till recently, Commander of the Byelorussian District. Gorbachov was accompanied on the tour by Defense Minister, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, and Lev Zaikov, Leningrad Party Chief who succeeded the now disgraced Grigori Romanov. This trip thus also shows Gorbachov flaunting his purge triumph at the July 1 Central Committee Plenum, which directly preceded the convening of the Supreme Soviet.

On July 1, a Central Committee plenum convened, chaired by Mikhail Gorbachov. The plenum was used by Gorbachov to advance his consolidation of power, and prepare for an accelerated war economy drive. Gorbachov's personal rival, Politburo member and former Leningrad Party boss Grigori Romanov, was ousted from the Politburo and the Secretariat, "in connection with retirement on health grounds"—even though Romanov is only 62. Gorbachov also kicked Andrei Gromyko, Soviet foreign minister since 1957, upstairs, by naming him President of the Supreme Soviet.

Threat to Egypt is

by Thierry Lalevée

U.S. failure to strike back at the terrorist command-centers behind the Shi'ite hijackers of TWA Flight 847 on June 14 has created a dynamic of disasters in the entire Middle East region. The root of the dangers now looming is the miscalculation that when the U.S. State Department and President Reagan praised Syrian President Hafez al Assad for being "helpful" in the crisis, this didn't imply concessions beyond a de facto recognition of Syrian sovereignty over Lebanon.

Can there be any doubt that guarantees given to Syria, also extend to Libya and Iran? If Syria didn't specify this clearly, Moscow did, in no uncertain terms! Assad has been crowned Melekh (King) Assad, but so have his friends, Muammar Qaddafi and Ayatollah Khomeini.

The results are all too visible.

The first victim, of course, has been the Lebanese nation which has been handed over to Syria, not only politically, but economically. What is the meaning of the resolution declaring an economic and military boycott against Lebanon, voted by the U.S. Congress on July 9, except that Syria and Iran will become the main economic and financial powers over a bankrupt Lebanese state? As Sheikh Abbas Moussavi of the Hezbollahi declared on July 10 to AFP: "We are getting our money from Iran"!

The second victim, has been the peace initiative, launched by Saudi King Fahd and Egyptian President Mubarak, built around the Feb. 11 agreement between Jordan's King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, permitting Jordan to represent the Palestinians in negotiations with Israel. But U.S. Undersecretary Richard Murphy, the partisan of a pro-Syrian policy from the outset, has already forgotten that he was to visit Amman for a meeting with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Jordan and the PLO are being besieged politically and militarily. Syria launched an unsuccessful coup attempt against King Hussein in mid-June, and Egypt had to send troops to the Jordanian border with Syria at the end of June, to act as deterrent. On July 8, the remaining Palestinian forces loyal to Arafat, the Badr Brigade in the Bekaa Valley, were militarily expelled from Lebanon by Syria.

Yet, this is only the beginning of things to come, as the Soviet strategic alliance of Syria, Libya, and Iran grows

growing fast

stronger. Algeria and Tunisia confront a new wave of fundamentalist unrest sponsored by Libya. However, few overlook the fact that the real target is Egypt, and President Mubarak's assassination is a real possibility. It is known that Syria has already deployed hit teams to assassinate Hussein and Arafat.

Egypt itself faces two interconnected crises: a growing fundamentalist movement at home, and the July 8 signing of a defense treaty between its immediate neighbors to the west and south, Sudan and Libya. Such a treaty followed months of deteriorating relations between the Sudan and Egypt, as Cairo was blamed for supporting the overthrown Numayri regime. A quick visit by President Mubarak and his ministers to Khartoum in early June did not resolve such issues as Numayri's presence in Cairo.

Though the Sudanese defense minister, Maj.-Gen. Mohammed Osman Abdullah, announced that the treaty did not imply a "strategic alliance" with Libya, there can be few illusions. Admittedly, with more than 4 million of its inhabitants starving to death and no significant financial help, even from the United States, it didn't require much to convince even the most pro-Western political circles in the country to accept a few million dollars from Libya. But the week-long Abdullah visit to Libya had nothing to do with the fate of those affected by drought and famine. The major-general is reported to have visited all of Libya's military camps, including terrorist training centers, and was reported "positively impressed." The former spokesman for the "Young Officer" movement in the days which preceded the coup of April 6, has now set in motion the dynamic leading into a new coup of which he will be the chief organizer. Then, the defense cooperation treaty will be officially acknowledged as a "strategic alliance."

Plotting such a coup are some 400 former Sudanese opposition activists, led by one "Zakaria," who recently clandestinely re-entered Sudan after ten years of exile in Libya. The core figures could be seen on July 4, leading a 40,000-strong demonstration against the Egyptian embassy in Khartoum, demanding the extradition of Gaafar Numayri. According to intelligence sources, such activists can be expected to follow Moscow's marching orders, which were trans-

mitted at the end of June in a series of articles by *Le Monde's* Eric Rouleau: Takeover of the Egyptian embassy and hold diplomats hostage in exchange for Numayri's extradition.

War with Libya?

In the event, should Egypt try to intervene in Sudan militarily, Libya would react. Qaddafi makes no secret of the fact that he is seeking a direct confrontation with Egypt. On July 8, JANA press agency announced that Libya had decided to expel all Egyptian workers from Libya. Though the exact number is unknown, this may run into the hundreds of thousands and would create an incredible burden on the unstable Egyptian economy. Then on July 9, Qaddafi called on "all Arab youth to burn the bridge between Israel and Egypt." These calls accompany a campaign of denunciation of Mubarak in the Libyan media.

On July 10, Mubarak refused to receive Qaddafi's special envoy, Ahmed Qaddafadam. Qaddafadam was then in Paris meeting with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who himself left for Cairo on July 11. Dumas, who on June 30 praised Franco-Syrian relations, told Mubarak that Paris would not support a peace initiative which lacks "the backing of Moscow or Damascus."

If such a confrontation were to occur—on a scale of 10, the likelihood is 6 right now, say insiders—there is little doubt that the Egyptian army could defeat Libya easily. However, intelligence analysts are concerned that neither Moscow nor Washington would allow Cairo to do so. It is not forgotten that Washington, under President Carter, prevented Anwar al Sadat from reaching Tripoli in the Egyptian-Libyan conflict of 1977. Moscow had given Carter an ultimatum.

Besides, a military crisis between Egypt and Sudan is bound to unleash a crisis within Egypt. The mushrooming fundamentalist groups gathered around the obscure Sheikh Hafez Salamah of the Mosk Nur in Cairo are waiting for this opportunity. Challenging the government authorities, Salamah has been holding political rallies one after another, with 5-6,000 disciples each week. Playing on the visible weakness of the government, he has demanded the immediate implementation of Islamic Law (*Shariah*), which would have been unthinkable a few years ago, but became an issue after the *Shariah's* implementation in Sudan under Numayri.

Though the ability of fanatics like Salamah to build a mass movement is questionable, by his extremism and fanaticism, Salamah is driving large parts of the Egyptian population, as well as important layers of the state, to seek refuge in what is seen as a more moderate and stable force, the official Muslim Brotherhood, which has two members of parliament. This organization, also fundamentalist and tightly linked to the Iranian revolution, has special attraction for many members of the army, it has been reported. There can be no doubt that this is the ultimate aim of Salamah's antics and bodes ill for Egypt's future, whether or not there is a confrontation with Libya.