

reminded Syria that perhaps its ally, the USSR, could be more helpful on the regaining of the Golan than its enemy, the US. This possibility emerged from the talks held between the Russian and Israeli ambassadors in Paris in which the former is supposed to have spoken of a resumption of relations if Israel returned at least a part of the Golan to Syria and if Syria accepted such a settlement. If this suggestion is not Israeli disinformation it could work both ways: either to make Syria suspicious of a possible Russian sell-out or indicate a way in which Russia could be helpful.

The decision of the Kuwaiti parliament to cut Kuwait's subventions to Syria, Jordan and the PLO (see page 11) is another painful reminder of Syria's vulnerability and dependence. Only if it achieves a striking success in putting Lebanon together again will its claim to be a regional power begin to look at all credible.

## Egypt and Sudan

### Courting hostility

from Simon Ingram

Cairo

The signing of a military pact between Sudan and Libya has sent shock waves down the Nile to Egypt, prompting fresh fears that the country's key strategic ally is slipping into the arms of its greatest enemy.

However, even in private, President Mubarak and other top officials still refuse to admit that Colonel Qadhafi has outsmarted them. Soon enough, they argue, the Sudanese will come to their senses and realise that they are better off with Egypt. Mubarak himself is said to have told Sudanese leaders bluntly that Sudan has more to lose than Egypt were the two countries' treaties of mutual defence and integration to be scrapped.

If this gambit conceals more bluff than reality, then the stakes are high indeed: the long-running African drought has cut sharply into Egypt's water supplies in Lake Nasser, and farmers are already getting less to irrigate their fields. Officials no longer shrug off the possibility of Egypt becoming what one has described as "a new Bangladesh on the shores of the Mediterranean". The almost total dependency of 48 million Egyptians on Nile water prompted their leaders to take rumours of a Libyan plot to destroy the high dam at Aswan last

year very seriously indeed. The new gut fear is that a Libyan-backed regime in Khartoum, astride both arms of the river, could easily tamper with the waters flowing north, or at best, serve as a new base for terrorist activity throughout the region. Beseated by mounting economic problems, and the current resurgence in Islamic fundamentalism, Egypt can ill-afford such a possibility.

It was in large part this growing awareness of Egypt's vulnerability to the south that took Mubarak to his first OAU summit since coming to power. The Cairo press has placed heavy emphasis on Egypt's revived interest in Africa, and in particular, its relations with Ethiopia. Mubarak's meeting with Colonel Mengistu was greeted with banner headlines, while his tête-a-tête with General Sawar adh-Dhahab received scant coverage. Further evidence of Cairo's irritation with Sudan came with reports that a planned visit by the Sudanese defence minister was called off by the Egyptians: the same minister had postponed an earlier trip at the last moment and gone instead to Tripoli to finalise details of the military pact.

More than anything, though, it has been Sudanese insistence on the extradition of former President Numeiri that has infuriated Mubarak. His first reaction was to send his chief aide, Osama al-Baz, to Khartoum, with the advice that Sudan should look to its real problems rather than dwell on the past. And when 40,000 Sudanese converged on the Egyptian embassy to voice their demands for their erstwhile leader's return (see page 14), Mubarak angrily blamed Libyan agents. The claim is not entirely implausible: the Libyan "People's Bureau" in Khartoum has expanded prodigiously since diplomatic relations were restored, and Libyan-style "popular committees" are increasingly active.

Nevertheless, hatred of Numeiri is one of the few unifying forces across

Sudan's fragmented political spectrum, and to pose as his protector is to court hostility. This truth is slowly dawning in Cairo, and has quickened the pace of diplomatic efforts to find him a new refuge. Whether a suitable host can be found quickly or not, Numeiri's presence has perceptibly sharpened long-standing Sudanese resentment towards Egypt. The fallout from this may not be felt until the handover to civilian rule in Khartoum — a none-too-distant eventuality for which some Egyptians are beginning to suspect Colonel Qadhafi is altogether better prepared than their own government.

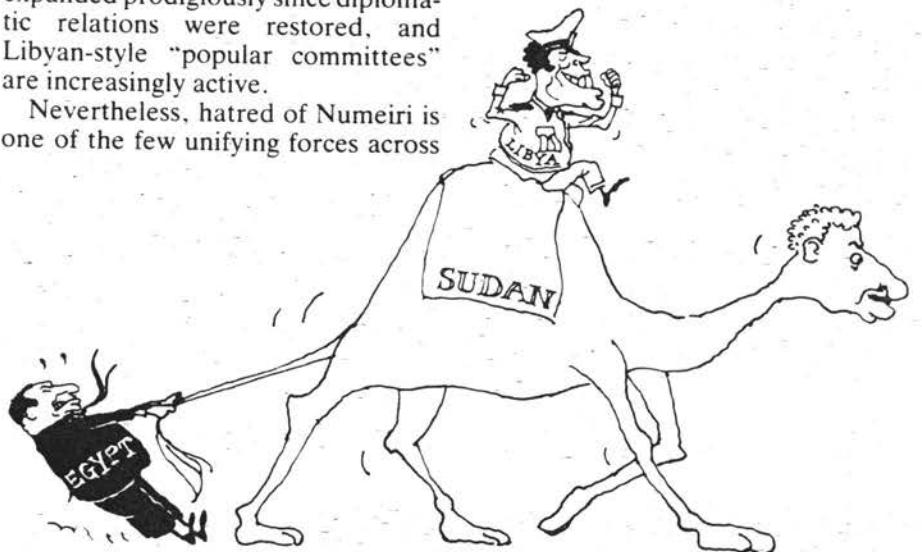
## Libya

### A dangerous embrace

from George Henderson London

With his usual inimitable sense of timing and occasion, Colonel Qadhafi has managed to infuriate his close ally, King Hassan of Morocco, while trying to curry favour with the Middle East's favourite bogymen, Ayatollah Khomeini. At the end of June, just after a visit to Tripoli by the speaker of the Iranian *majlis*, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Libya announced that it would now join Iran in the creation of an army to liberate Jerusalem and of an international revolutionary Islamic league. Libya also stated that the two countries would now enjoy regular consultations on political and military matters through joint commissions.

The reactions were not long in coming. King Hassan, who had created the Arab-African Union between Morocco and Libya with Colonel Qadhafi last August, was reportedly furious with the colonel for his indiscreet enthusiasm for close



#255