

Shaikh Jaber sent his messages to the heads of state in his capacity as Deputy Amir during Amir Sabah's absence abroad (see above).

Relations with Trinidad & Tobago

It was announced on 4 September that Kuwait and the Caribbean state of Trinidad & Tobago had agreed to establish diplomatic relations.

ECONOMIC: Oil & Gas

Aminoil Workers on Strike for Two Days

American Independent Oil Company (Aminoil) employees, who called off a strike planned for 26 August (ARR 368), stopped work on 9 and 10 September. On the evening of 10 September their union leaders were received by the Interior & Defence Minister, Shaikh Saad Abdulla as-Sabah, who assured them that the workers would be paid for the time during which they had been on strike and would be treated fairly by Aminoil's management. The union leaders then agreed that the men should return to work next morning, while negotiations continued.

No Gain in Replacing Dollar

In an interview with the daily *As-Siyasa* published on 10 September the Finance & Oil Minister, Abder-Rahman Salem Atiqi, said oil-producing states would gain no advantage by substituting other currencies for the dollar in revenue payments, provided that they were guaranteed compensation for changed currency values. This was a matter to be handled by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

At least two Arab oil-producing countries are considering substituting other currencies for the dollar in oil revenue payments - Saudi Arabia (ARR 373) and Libya (see LIBYA).

Lebanon

POLITICAL: Internal

Army Officer Kills Three Men

Three Lebanese citizens, two of them members of the Syrian-backed Saiqa guerrilla organisation, were killed on 3 September by an army officer after their car had been stopped at a check-point near Beirut. An army communique said the incident began after one of the passengers in the car was found to be carrying a pistol. An army officer, Lieutenant Walid Hasan, got into the car and ordered the driver to report to a military headquarters. The car was followed by an army patrol. The driver took an incorrect route and Hasan drew his pistol, ordering the driver to go back. One of the passengers then tried to take the pistol away but was shot in the ensuing struggle. The car then came under fire from elements outside and the two other civilians in the car were killed by the officer. The incident occurred near the home of Farouq Muqaddam Ibrahim Klailat, leader of the Nasserite 24 October Movement, and the guards outside his house were thought to be involved.

Guerrillas Not Involved

The Prime Minister, Takiyeddin Solh, said after a special cabinet meeting on 4 September that the Palestinian resistance movement was definitely not involved in the incident. He said the military courts had begun an immediate investigation and that the officer involved was being interrogated.

A statement issued by Saiqa said the shooting had broken out when a guard at the home of Klailat had feared that the approaching army patrol intended to surround the house. The Saiqa men had been in a passing taxi.

Baathists Reported Arrested

Security authorities arrested a number of Baath Party members on 13 September because of slogans written on a wall denouncing the Jordanian regime and supporting the Palestinian resistance movement, the *Iraqi News Agency* reported next day.

Foreign Affairs

New Ambassador to East Germany

The new Ambassador to East Germany, Dr Khalil Makkawi, presented his credentials in East Berlin on 13 September.

ECONOMIC: General

Government Measures to Curb Inflation

The Government on 1 September adopted a number of measures to curb inflation (ARR 369) including the establishment of special courts to try monopolists and the setting up of a permanent ministerial committee to control prices. On 12 September it decided on sterner penalties for violators of the official price index.

Electricity and Water Shortage Continues

The shortage of electricity and water (ARR 369) continued to cause problems. The government decided on 12 September to buy two generators to forestall any reduction in power output caused by the water shortage in the Karaoun Dam. As a protest against the shortage of water, however, the residents of the central Kesrouan area on 2 September staged a demonstration blocking all the roads into the region. Attempts to divert some water to Kesrouan from the neighbouring Ftouh district caused protests and demonstrations in Ftouh on 15 September with the blocking of all roads again after the inhabitants of Ftouh had blown up the installations taking water from their region to Kesrouan.

Oil & Gas

Medreco Talks Open

Talks began on 10 September between the Government and the Mediterranean Refining Company (Medreco) on prices of oil after the temporary settlement of a dispute last August (ARR 345).

Libya

POLITICAL: Foreign

Control of Oil Companies Taken Over

The Prime Minister, Major Abdes-Salam Jalloud, announced the 51 per cent take-over of almost all foreign oil companies operating in Libya at the military parade and rally marking the fourth anniversary of the revolution (see *Internal Affairs* and *ECONOMIC: Oil & Gas*).

Boycott of Libyan Oil Sought by US

As early as 2 September senior White House and State Department officials admitted that the United States Government

(disclaimer)

Zuhair Muhsen, the next day demanded that the Lebanese authorities should 'uncover those responsible for this action and bring them to justice'. He added that the security service of the Palestinian resistance movement would pursue those 'who try to profit from certain abnormal situations in order to stir up civil strife'. He was referring to the tension between Saiqa and other Palestinian groups caused by the recent Syrian rapprochement with Jordan (see *ARAB-ISRAELI AFFAIRS*).

Foreign Affairs

Kuwaiti Amir in Beirut

The Amir of Kuwait, Shaikh Sabah Salem as-Sabah, visited Lebanon from 21 to 26 September and had talks with President Franjiya and the Prime Minister, Takiyeddin Solh. A joint communique, published on 26 September, said discussions covered developments in the Palestinian problem and the need for unity in the face of Israeli aggression.

Tension with Iran over Palestine

Iran warned Lebanon on 25 September that it would close down its embassy if there was any repetition of an incident 'last week' in which an Iranian diplomat was reportedly kidnapped and beaten up by Palestinian guerrillas. The *Palestine News Agency (Wafa)* said the same day that the story was a fabrication. *Baghdad Radio* had reported the previous day that the embassy was distributing arms to rightist elements in Lebanon for use against the Palestinians.

Diplomatic Appointments

Georgi Hristov Tanev was appointed Bulgarian Ambassador to Lebanon on 22 September. The new Libyan Ambassador, Muhammad Abdel-Qader Ghouqa, presented his credentials to President Franjiya on 26 September. The Lebanese Ambassador to the United Nations, Edouard Ghourra, was additionally appointed Ambassador to Jamaica on 19 September.

ECONOMIC: General

Purchase of Electricity Generators Approved

In order to alleviate the shortage of electricity (ARR 390), the cabinet on 19 September approved the purchase of two generators from the American Westinghouse concern. They will begin to operate in mid-November.

Water for 94 Per Cent of Population

Minister of State Joseph Shader said on 23 September that although there was a water shortage (ARR 390) 'water has reached 94 per cent of the population, which is a very high percentage for a country like Lebanon'. The remaining six per cent would receive piped water within three years, he added.

Finance

Budget Approved by Cabinet

The cabinet on 26 September approved the budget for 1974, totalling £Leb 1,385,295,000 (about £173 million), an increase of £Leb 205,266,100 (about £25.5 million) over 1973. The three ministries allocated the most were Defence (about £37.6 million, an increase of £8 million), Education (about £34 million, an increase of £8.7 million) and Public Works (about £19.5 million, an increase of £5 million).

SOCIAL: Religion

'Children of God' Arrested

Ten members of a religious sect calling itself the Children of God were arrested by the Lebanese authorities for criticising

some Arab countries and calling for a new religion, the *Al-Anwar* reported on 19 September. Those arrested included five Americans and two Canadians.

Libya

POLITICAL: Internal

Popular Committees Rebuked

Revolution Command Council member Major Omar Muftic on 19 September addressed the popular committees of the sector in Tripoli. The fundamental aim of the movement was not to dismiss some people in order to appoint others in their place, he said. The purpose was to understand the aims of the oil policy and justifications for nationalisation so that the work of the committees was not only administrative but also creative. The committees must bear responsibility for their actions, but at the same time they could not keep wide-ranging powers without supervision from the RCC. 'The RCC has the right to put an end to the activities of the popular committees when they have accomplished their duty, or to order them to do more until they achieve the aim for which they were formed,' he said, and went on, 'It should not be remembered that some may be punished when they commit a grave mistake, or when some of their members try to seize control and cause disruption or deviate from the march.'

In a statement in *Al-Fajr al-Jadid* on 24 September, Muftic responded to allegations propagated by imperialist quarters and foreign and agent press, Muhaishi admitted that some popular committees had been dissolved, but stressed that they would be replaced. (See ARR 392).

Wages to be Paid to Political Prisoners

The cabinet decided on 18 September that political detainees should be paid their wages while in jail, whether employed in ministries and public organisations or in the private sector.

Foreign Affairs

Husain Attacked over Amnesty

A commentary in *Al-Jihad*, quoted by *Tripoli Radio* on 20 September, attacked King Husain of Jordan, in the light of his recent amnesty for political detainees, for his 'treachery and hypocrisy'. It said that 'wearing a different mask at each meeting is a habit he inherited from his grandfather, Abdulla'. The release of jailed fedayeen was useless, and in fact the Palestine issue is now at risk because of the presence of the fabricated throne in Amman. It was bad luck, the paper said, for the Palestine resistance that its usurper was a country was situated on the borders of Jordan and Lebanon, 'which prefer Zionist infiltration of their countries to the presence of the resistance'. The Arab people were urged to remain unconcerned about leaders such as Husain, and otherwise, it said, they could one day become a nation of refugees.

Guerrillas Land after Austrian Operation

A small private plane carrying two Palestinian guerrillas of an organisation calling itself The Eagles of the Palestine Revolution and piloted by two Austrian volunteers was finally allowed to land at Tripoli airport on 29 September after being refused permission (see *ARAB-ISRAELI AFFAIRS*).