

## Washington Watch

### Mubarak Changes Course

[AN] Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Washington this week, his first since Anwar Sadat's assassination October 6, will inevitably focus on the foreign policy issues that are a legacy of the late president. Equally important in the view of some observers, however, Mubarak is likely to take the White House talks as an opportunity to distance himself from his predecessor, particularly in the field of economic affairs.

Mubarak is currently riding a wave of popularity at home, largely because of his efforts to open a democratic dialogue with political and religious leaders jailed by Sadat and because of his crackdown on corruption. This latter campaign targets government officials as well as those in the private sector who profited illegally from Sadat's "open door" economic policies.

Egypt's announcement last week that some 66 Soviet technicians will be returning to the country and the taking by some as a counter to those opponents who criticize the government for becoming excessively dependent on the United States. But the new arrangement also signals a policy shift by Egypt's new economic team, an attempt to be more pragmatic about economic development plans.

Under Sadat's "open door" policy the country became flooded with foreign luxury items. Given Egypt's average per capita income of \$400, the importation of expensive electronic gadgetry, cars, fashions and food by the wealthy became a focus of popular discontent and swelled the ranks of the Muslim fundamentalists.

Egyptian planners are now working to reshape the "open door" policy to ensure that a larger number of the country's 42 million people benefit from it.

Under the tutelage of Muhammed Abdul Fattah Ibrahim, the newly appointed deputy prime minister for economic affairs and minister of investment and international cooperation, the new ministers of finance, planning and economy seek to wean the economy away from an overdependency on the chief foreign exchange earners: oil exports, tourism, remittances from Egyptians working abroad and tariffs from the Suez Canal.

The economy has grown in recent years largely as a result of increased earnings in these four areas, but Mubarak and his team would like to see the development of an industrial base to better anchor the economy.

Sadat's expulsion of Soviet diplomats and some 1,000 experts last September dealt a serious blow to industrial development by slowing efforts to repair the Aswan Dam — Egypt's largest completed project — and adversely affecting the plans for a steel works facility and an aluminum complex.

The rapprochement with the Soviet Union comes shortly after Mubarak remarked to a foreign journalist that an exchange of ambassadors between Moscow and Cairo was "inevitable," though he gave no timetable for such action. An economic team has since been dispatched to meet with leaders in Moscow.

At the same time a delegation of Egyptian economic experts visited Washington just last week.

In addition to his stop-off in Washington, Mubarak is expected to visit France, Italy and West Germany in the coming days in an effort to gain support for his economic strategy, among other things.

The Cairo government has also called for the

convening of an international meeting next month to reassess Egypt's economy and lay the groundwork for a new five-year plan.

Having consolidated his power, Mubarak is slowly changing a political course which, up until now, has closely followed Anwar Sadat's. If Israel evacuates from its positions in the Sinai on April 25 — as the Camp David agreement stipulates — observers are looking for Mubarak to move closer to moderate Arab states in an effort to break Egypt's isolation. Saudi Arabia, whose leaders Mubarak has met on numerous occasions as an emissary for Sadat, is a logical place for Egypt to begin as it tries to enlist economic support for its development plans.

### AUTO DEATH COSTS

Auto crash deaths and injuries cost the nation \$20.1 billion a year; more than the total cost of either coronary heart disease or stroke.

Those findings come from a study comparing costs of cancer, auto accidents, heart disease and stroke, says Dr. Justine Rozier, extension specialist in family resource management at North Carolina State University.

[AN] The Namibia agreement. Having made revisions in the first set of published principles, the Contact Group has now been told those revisions are unacceptable to the Namibian independence movement SWAPO, which is recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Foreign ministers from eight key African states — the six front-line countries plus OAU chair Kenya and powerful Nigeria — agreed to endorse SWAPO's objections during a meeting in Dar es Salaam January 23.

At the same time, the South African revisions, which had been worked out during high-level meetings between U.S. and South African of-

icials over the past three months. At South Africa's insistence, the five dropped a clause prohibiting discrimination in "private cultural, social, health, and educational institutions." U.S. officials argue that the guarantee of "freedom from racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual discrimination" included in the declaration of rights clause is sufficient.

The revised text also calls for a two-tier system for selecting national assembly members — half representing specific geographic precincts and half allocated to political parties on the basis of their percentage of the total vote.

The African group, clearly suspicious of South Africa and the U.S., oppose both these changes. They want a single system for selecting assembly members. They also want the principles to contain a firmer commitment to alter the racial imbalances in such key services as the police and judiciary.

Reagan declared that when his administration came in, the Namibia negotiations were "on dead center" or "stalled totally."

[AN] The House subcommittee on Africa is holding hearings on the administration's plans to revise export control regulations affecting South Africa. Non-government critics of relaxed controls will testify on February 4. Officials from the Commerce and State Departments will appear on February 9.

[AN] In two recent television interviews, President Reagan has expressed confidence that independence for Namibia is nearing.

"We are getting cooperation from South Africa as well as from the front-line African states and from our European allies, and we think we're making and have made progress toward a free Namibia," he said in his January 27 talk with CBS' Dan Rather.

On January 21, Tony Brown, filming a television interview for broadcast on his syndicated "Journal" in February, asked the President: "What about your administration's position on Africa; many people are saying it's not very clear?" In replying, Reagan spoke only of southern Africa: "Our position is, and we've made it plain — and the South Africans recognize — that we find apartheid repugnant. We hope we can help them in moving farther away and all the way away from that," according to a White House transcript.

Later he said: "What we would like to achieve is not only independence for Namibia but the exit of Cubans from Angola."

In both interviews,

[AN] Former UN Ambassador Donald McHenry, who was the architect and coordinator of the Namibia negotiations during the Carter administration, rejects Reagan administration charges that a new approach to U.S./South African relations had to be tried. "I think the record of South African intransigence on the question of Namibia is abundantly clear, and I think the participants in this administration know it," he argues. His comments are being published in the first edition of a new monthly by TransAfrica Forum, the research and educational affiliate of the black American lobby TransAfrica in Washington, scheduled for release this week.

Suit coats and sport coats should be hung on shaped wooden hangers to preserve shoulder fit.



### Business In The Black

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