

Has France's Mitterrand signed the death warrant for Chad?

by Mark Burdman

"There is a faction in France that asks, 'Why not a federation in Chad? The Arabs will go with Libya and the slaves will go with France.'" With these words, spoken at a press conference in the Chad capital city of Ndjamena on Aug. 23, Chad Information Minister Soumalia Mahamat identified the premise of French policy toward the crisis in Chad.

In the two months since Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi, with massive Soviet backing, launched aggression against Chad, French policy has been a mixture of cynicism, political compromise, and impotent military posturing, pivoted on a consensus among policy elites that the continent of Africa need not (or should not) be economically developed and that Africans are (either useful or useless) slaves to the whims of the Q'uai d'Orsay, France's foreign ministry.

In plain language, France has groveled before Qaddafi. And, to the dismay of Africans, the United States has left France to allow the destruction of what President Reagan recently called France's "sphere of influence" in Chad. Notwithstanding the President's Aug. 23 characterization of Qaddafi's actions in Chad as "naked external aggression," American response to the Chad crisis on the ground is overshadowed by the same day's State Department announcement that U.S. AWACs radar-monitoring devices were being removed from Sudan, in recognition that French unwillingness to deploy its Jaguar jets in the Chad theatre made the AWACs unnecessary. Intelligence insiders trace the most current round of sabotage of American policy in Africa to a secret visit in early August to the Elysée presidential palace in Paris by special envoy Vernon Walters, a friend of Henry Kissinger and a high-level operative of the Propaganda-2 Freemasonic lodge of Italy.

In this context came a report in the Italian press Aug. 25-26 that U.S. State Department special envoy to the Middle East Robert McFarlane, another Kissinger operative, has just opened discussions with Italy's P-2-controlled mafioso Prime Minister Bettino Craxi—to discuss a role for Craxi in mediating the Chad crisis! Various KGB-linked Socialist International operatives—including France's Claude Estier, Portugal's Mario Soares, and reportedly Greece's Andreas Papatheou—are being brought into discussions of the Craxi role.

If the *danse macabre* of Paris and Washington over Chad brings pleasure to the colonialists at Anatoly Gromyko's

Africa Institute in Moscow, it is also met by a smug satisfaction in Jerusalem. Israel's capital has become the new Mecca for African leaders seeking protection from Qaddafi's legions. The elaborate state visit by Liberia's President Samuel Doe and six cabinet ministers to Israel in late August to concretize wide-sweeping security, military, and economic arrangements, and the decision by the government of the Central African Republic Aug. 24 to become the third in Africa to resume diplomatic relations with Israel are only the surface ripples of a major transformation. Among the governments expected to trek to Jerusalem are those of Kenya, Togo, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gabon, and even the Qaddafi-linked Sankara government of Upper Volta. Israeli sources forecast breakthroughs as well in relations between Israel and the Soviet-linked nation of Ethiopia, and Israeli-Ethiopian ties in the security and military sphere are already reported to be more extensive than conventional wisdom acknowledges.

The debacle of French policy in Africa is underscored by the extraordinary set of formulations made by Mitterrand in his Aug. 25 interview with *Le Monde*.

In verbiage, the interview was an attempt to please everybody: the restive traditional French military, by warning of a French response "beyond defensive retaliation" if Qaddafi were to attack French forces inside Chad; President Reagan, by praising French-American coordination and condemning Qaddafi for "aggression"; the French left, by eschewing both "preventive" military action and the provision of French air cover for a Chad government attempt to reconquer northern Chad from the Libyans; Colonel Qaddafi, by holding upon the olive branch for negotiations; and France's "clients" in Africa, by praising Chad leader Hissene Habré's integrity and courage and by rejecting the idea of partitioning Chad.

In reality, as *Le Figaro's* Chad correspondent noted on Aug. 26, the interview is being viewed at best as "nice words that will disappear in the desert" of Chad, since Mitterrand punted on any plan to actually prevent the partition of Chad, refused to indicate how France would act to force Qaddafi to withdraw from Chad, and deferred all substantial decision-making over Chad to the Organization of African Unity and to the United Nations.

"If the Chadians were in a mood for laughing," *Figaro* reported, they would "split their sides" over the latter idea,

since these institutions would be ineffective (at best) in dealing with the Chad situation. Beyond all these factors, *Figaro* notes, what particularly upset the Habré forces in Ndjamena was Mitterrand's endorsement of the solution of "federation" for Chad, which they regard as "a disaster . . . madness . . . since it would collapse immediately," and break up the nation of Chad.

Mitterrand's actual words on federation are worth quoting. "A federation," he explained, "often conforms more to reality than a formal unity that is always broken apart. But it is not up to France to decide. Nothing can be concluded without the agreement of the Chadians themselves."

Jesuitically contorted as this may be, Chad leader Hissene Habré's reaction to Mitterrand's statement was quite simple. According to French radio on Aug. 26, Habré was "infuriated."

As a fierce nationalist, Habré becomes immediately expendable under conditions where Chad is being regionally split between respective Soviet-Libyan and nominally French spheres. Already, Paris gossip networks are full of rumors that, in fact, both Habré and Libyan asset Goukkouni Oueddei are about to be terminated, as part of a broader French-Libyan deal over Chad premised around a new leadership; sources inside Chad report that Goukkouni has not been seen in public in almost a month. Such a deal is being supported by the French cotton interests centered around such nasty old imperialists as Dominique Ponchardier, and by the pro-Libyan Freemasonic lobby of former Minister of Foreign Trade Michel Jobert, Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, and special Elysée African affairs adviser Guy Penne. Recent visits by Roland Dumas, Mitterrand's personal lawyer, to Tripoli, Libya, were reportedly in pursuit of that kind of wretched deal.

'Mitterrand must remember Munich'

The Hitler-modeled Qaddafi, of course, has no intention of fulfilling his side of the deal with Mitterrand. Qaddafi is biding his time militarily, while supporting anti-French guerrillas in southern Chad and expanding his subversion in Africa into several nations, including Cameroon, Mali, and Sudan. In the most recent edition of the weekly magazine *Le Point*, President Gaafar Numeiry of Sudan presented concrete evidence of Libyan efforts to destabilize his country; Numeiry called on "France, America, and all the free countries to aid Chad and participate in the combat" to bring a halt to Qaddafi's imperialist ambitions in Africa.

On Aug. 23, Chad Information Minister Mahamat announced to journalists that Qaddafi was "preparing a new aggression which is intended to lead to the total annexation of Chad." He claimed that 100 Soviet-supported Libyan tanks and armored personnel carriers were moving south toward the town of Salal in west-central Chad, en route from the captured town of Faya-Largeau to the capital of Ndjamena. Despite all the talk of "military stalemate" in the current situation, Libyan units have continued operations in the town of Koro Toro 50 kilometers south of Faya-Largeau, and Lib-

yan jets have bombarded Umm Chalouda, a city in eastern Chad.

According to the best military estimates, the Soviets have recently installed SAM-5 anti-aircraft systems around the airport of Faya-Largeau, and are continuing to bring advisers and materiel into the war theatre. They are being abetted by the Papandreou government of Greece, which recently negotiated a secret arrangement with the Soviets to allow the U.S.S.R. to use Greek territory for transport of military equipment to the Libya-Chad region, according to information from African, Israeli, and Turkish sources. Greek government officials in Europe, confronted by evidence of Mr. Papandreou's deal, told *EIR* that "Libya to us is a friendly country," and emphasized that their policy toward Libya was coordinated with that of the U.S. State Department!

With great show, France has sent over 3,000 soldiers and advisers to Chad and have deployed four Mirage, four 2000-kilometer-range Jaguar jets, and one midair-resupply jet into Chad's territorial boundaries. But this deployment has, in late August, remained concentrated along a line that "partitions" Chad de facto from north to south, between French and Libyan interests.

In an interview with *Le Matin* Aug. 23, Gen. Chevance Bertin, who has had 50 years of experience as a top French commander in Chad, commented on the current French deployment in Chad. "What confuses me," said Chevance Bertin, "is the way in which the troops are deployed, because this allows one to see a sort of partition. We remain static, while Qaddafi knows what he wants—Aouzou [the strip in northern Chad unofficially annexed by Libya from which Qaddafi extends his aggression southward—M.B.]. If we leave this to him, it would be a catastrophe. One cannot negotiate with Qaddafi in a spirit of concessions.

"Mitterrand must remember Munich," Chevance Bertin emphasized. By leaving Qaddafi in possession of his northern Chad conquests, "one will have a perpetual war" in Chad. He concluded by calling for the "reconquest of the North," with France providing air cover for Habré's forces to carry out this mission. "Because he wants a strong Chad," the general noted, "Habré is an obstacle to the hegemonic designs of Qaddafi."

The tenor of the general's policy has been supported in previous days by leading African affairs advisers for the Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République party, including Yves Lancien and Jean de Lipkowski, who negotiated joint French-Chad security and military agreements in 1976 for the Giscard government. Mitterrand's policy, de Lipkowski warned, was putting France "in a very dangerous position" by communicating the idea that France accepted a dividing line between North and South.

Mitterrand pronounced to *Le Monde* on Aug. 25 that "France would not be brought into a battle not of its own decision," and would refuse to provide air cover for a move by Habré to reconquer the north. On the foundation of such pomposity, France will find itself irrelevant in the African strategic picture.