

Syrian president calls for holy war on Israel

DAMASCUS, Syria - President Hafez Assad on Thursday bitterly decried the changes sweeping Eastern Europe as a boon to Israel and called for a holy war "as long as time" against the Jewish state.

The Syrian leader also fiercely denounced the recent wave of Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel in his first public comment on the matter, saying migrating Jews would force Palestinians from their homeland.

"Let us now perceive that Israel was the first beneficiary, among all nations of the world, of the international changes that have taken place," Assad told a youth rally marking his socialist Baath party's 27th anniversary in power.

The 6,500 youths and party activ-

ists gathered in a basketball arena interrupted the president 61 times with applause or chanting during his 95-minute speech.

Assad complained that in socialist countries once resolutely opposed to Israel, "Zionists are now active everywhere."

Assad said pro-Israeli delegations now often visit socialist countries, an apparent reference to Israeli delegations that have won recognition for their country from some Eastern European states.

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia re-established relations with Israel in the past six months. All the Eastern European countries except for Romania broke ties over the 1967

Arab-Israeli War.

The Zionist "influence has become clear in the media, where they have infiltrated in more than one socialist country," Assad added.

He alleged that Zionists in those countries went in "hot pursuit" of their foes in a campaign ranging from "attacking the ideas of their opponents" to "attack and assassination in the streets."

Assad, long a hard-line opponent of Israel, vowed to continue his struggle, "bearing in mind that the time is long and our Jihad (holy war) should be as long as time is."

"We are just at the beginning of this long time," he added. "It is not we who have to ask, 'until when?'"

Rather, the enemy is the one who should ask this question."

Assad said Israel still seeks a "greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates," referring to a radical version of Zionism that foresaw Jewish rule from Egypt to Iraq.

He denounced an expected mass migration of Soviet Jews to Israel stemming from greater freedom in the Soviet Union.

He equated this freedom with aggression, calling it "the freedom of occupying other people's territory and expelling them from their land."

He said most Soviet Jews are not even descended from the ancient Hebrew tribes, but rather from the Khazar people of what is now the

Soviet Union, who converted to Judaism centuries ago.

"Beyond any doubt, the United States played the major role in the realization of Israeli desires," Assad said, adding that Washington should "bear some of its responsibility, at least in the last episode of the game."

Assad did not hold the Soviet Union, a long-time Syrian ally, responsible for the Jewish exodus, however, and he repeated his assertion that "the relationship between Syria and the Soviet Union is now as firm as ever."

The Soviet Union has given Syria massive economic and military aid, including combat jets, tanks and missiles. Syria reportedly owes the Soviets \$15 billion for weapons.

Critics question motives of LBJ book; Caro won't comment on one-sidedness

WASHINGTON - This town has been seduced, intrigued, excited and divided by a book about a politician dead 17 years and an election that took place 42 years ago.

The book is "Means of Ascent," which portrays a youthful Lyndon B. Johnson willing to do almost anything to satisfy an all-consuming political ambition. It is the second volume of a projected four-volume critical biography of Johnson by author Robert Caro, who already has devoted 14 years to the project.

Jack Valenti, aide to the former president, calls Caro's work "this loathsome book" -- but admits he read every word when The New Yorker serialized it in November, January and February and will now proceed to read the book whole.

"Why, why, why would a man want to spend this much of his life writing about a fellow that he can't stand and whose reputation he is so passionately bent on destroying?" asks Valenti.

The controversy picks up where it left off following the appearance eight years ago of Caro's first volume, which Washington Post critic Jonathan Yardley said demonstrated the author's "enraged animus against Lyndon Johnson."

Publisher Alfred Knopf, sensing a blockbuster, printed 250,000 copies. The New Yorker says its newsstand sales showed a 5 percent blip when the first excerpt appeared. Politics & Prose bookstore co-owner Barbara Meade said, "We have never had any book where we have taken so many pre-publication orders."

History buff Jeff Patterson, aide to Rep. Mike Andrews, D-Texas, says that in his office excerpts were photocopied as fast as they appeared and sent back to Texas.

Patterson shares Valenti's complaint. "Caro sets out to make Johnson

look like a real jerk," he says. "Give me warts-and-all, but don't try to overdo it."

Former Johnson aide Lloyd Hacker says Caro "puts more emphasis on the negatives -- and God knows Johnson had those -- than on the positives." But he adds: "It's probably the best job of research that anybody has ever done on Johnson."

The book covers seven years, from Johnson's 1941 defeat for a Senate seat in a rigged election to his 1948 victory -- by 87 votes -- over an enormously popular former governor, Coke Stevenson.

The theft by Johnson of that primary election has been Texas lore for years, but Caro provides new evidence of Johnson's fraudulence.

The book also says Johnson pulled strings in Washington to enhance the power and value of a Texas radio station that made him a millionaire.

And it says Johnson shamelessly distorted a war career in which he flew in a battered B-26 under enemy fire for only a few minutes -- then accepted a politically useful Silver Star from Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Caro's critics say his legwork is meticulous and his writing thrilling, but his viewpoint warped: He can find little good -- or balanced -- to say about Johnson and nothing bad to say about Stevenson, ignoring his isolationism and racism. Patterson says Stevenson comes across as "Saint Coke."

Political reporter David Broder, reviewing the book in the Washington Post, said Caro makes Johnson "a complete scoundrel" and "a lying, cunning, utterly unprincipled operator." Broder wondered how Caro will dig his way out of that "Texas-size hole" in dealing with Johnson's achievements as Senate majority leader and president.

Caro did not respond to messages



asking for a reply.

"We don't want to respond to a single review," said Knopf publicist Paul Bogaards.

But in the book's introduction Caro acknowledges he paints a portrait of a despicable person.

While "bright and dark" threads run through Johnson's life, Caro writes, no bright thread is visible in the period covered, a time "Johnson was all but totally consumed by his need for power and by his efforts to obtain it."

"He obviously has seen Johnson's darker side," says George Christian of Austin, Texas, a former Johnson press secretary. "I just hope that in the subsequent volumes he gives Johnson credit for what he did."

Horace Busby, a Johnson associate for 20 years, says he wants to reserve judgment. But Busby offers an observation on the controversial Silver Star -- a decoration that Johnson used to great effect for the rest of his political life.

"He didn't seize the Silver Star," says Busby. "MacArthur, who was a political general, gave it to him to curry favor with Franklin Roosevelt, who liked Johnson. What was Johnson to do -- throw it back?"

Najib says rebels purged; coup leader promises fight

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - President Najib of Afghanistan said Thursday that the military has been purged of mutinous soldiers, but the renegade general who led a bloody coup attempt said from hiding he would keep fighting.

Radio Kabul put the death toll at 56 and said 200 people were injured in fighting since Tuesday's air raid over Kabul. Some travelers who witnessed the attacks said civilian casualties appeared low considering the ferocity of the battles.

The normally bustling markets of the capital opened again Thursday, and the war-weary city was reported calm. Questions surfaced about the strength and loyalty of the Afghan air force, the key factor in Najib's survival since the Soviet Union pulled its troops out of Afghanistan last year.

Shah Nawaz Tanai, who as defense minister launched the coup attempt, said in a taped message to his supporters Thursday: "We have risen and our struggle will continue."

Tanai defected Wednesday to the Moslem guerrillas battling Najib's government, but guerrilla leaders made clear Thursday they have no desire to join forces with the hard-line Marxist.

"He's no different than Najib. How can we extend our support to a Communist?" said Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, leader of the radical Islamic Ittehad faction and prime minister of the guerrillas' government in exile.

Radio Kabul said Najib replaced Tanai as defense minister Tuesday and dismissed him Thursday from the Supreme Defense Council.

Four other council members also were replaced because of "national dishonesty," said the radio, monitored in Islamabad.

According to the radio, Najib declared the mutinous troops had been purged from the armed forces. And a diplomat based in Kabul

quoted the president as telling a news conference: "The microbes, the radicals among us, have been cleansed. We don't have any more factions. We are more united than ever."

According to the diplomat, who refused to be identified further, Najib said pro-Tanai soldiers had been killed, arrested or had surrendered. He again declared his government was strong and urged Western nations to revise their pro-resistance policies.

In his message, Tanai said he was inside Afghanistan but he did not say where.

"I am sending this cassette with my friend outside to be broadcast to you," he said in comments translated by the guerrillas' news agency from Dari into English.

"This is a call for Afghanistan's Moslem people and the army and the real party members. Najib and his dictatorship will fall. For this and for national unity, we have risen up."

The tape was played to reporters, who recognized Tanai's voice from military briefings, news conferences, and television appearances.

Tanai was in at least temporary alliance with one of the most radical guerrilla leaders, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Sibghatullah Mojaddidi, the moderate president of the guerrillas' exile government, rejected the Tanai-Hekmatyar alliance. "We do not have any understanding or solidarity with either," he said.

Tanai and Hekmatyar were bitter rivals during the 12 years of war after the 1978 coup that installed a Communist government in Afghanistan. Tanai had opposed Najib's proposals to talk peace with the guerrillas, and Hekmatyar said he would only support an Islamic government in Afghanistan.

They appeared united in their desire to see Najib ousted.

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