

U.S. Raid Triggers Arab

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MANAMA, Bahrain, April 26—Riot police today used tear gas to quell incipient demonstrations against the alleged use of Bahraini facilities by U.S. aircraft involved in the ill-fated mission to rescue the Tehran embassy hostages.

Although handled skillfully by disciplined riot police, the incidents in two villages north of here underlined the vulnerability of this island state and by extension, of Saudi Arabia's nearby oil-producing eastern provinces and Kuwait, where all was reported quiet.

All share with Iran a large Shiite Moslem population. Bahrain is particularly sensitive—more than half its population is Shiite. It once belonged to Iran and is now once again being claimed by some Iranian officials.

The disturbances only strengthened a general feeling among the moderate Sunni Moslem rulers of the three countries—and similar Arab leaders elsewhere—that the abortive American raid had further endangered security in the Persian Gulf by sucking them into an unwanted conflict and bringing into question the reliability of U.S. arms to help them.

Their misgivings have been growing steadily since the U.S. inability to save Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's throne in January 1979.

The Jordanian newspaper *Al Rai* said the rescue operation "had brought the entire Gulf area to the brink of disaster" while one Kuwaiti daily, *Al Anba*, denounced it as a "blatant violation of a Moslem state's sovereignty."

Meanwhile, despite the uproar in Iran and elsewhere in the region over the failed U.S. action, Iranian Foreign

Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh arrived in Syria on the first leg of an Arab tour aimed at mustering support for the Tehran regime.

Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam greeted his Iranian counterpart on arrival in Damascus and promptly condemned the U.S. raid as "an act of piracy which reflects the bankruptcy of the American administration."

Other hardline Arabs, including Libya, South Yemen and the Palestine Liberation Organization, condemned the U.S. operation. Libyan Foreign Minister Ali Abdul-Salam Treiki called for U.N. headquarters to be transferred out of New York on the grounds that the raid showed the United States was unworthy to be the organization's host country.

Criticism by most Arab states was relatively restrained, however, and centered on the violation of Iranian sovereignty, reflecting general opposition throughout the Arab world to any big-power interference in the region and a sense of outrage that the United States had mounted an attack against fellow Moslems.

Saudi Arabia, by contrast, maintained official silence on the U.S. raid. But the daily *Madina*, published in Jeddah, cited a statement by the 42-member Islamic Conference against the use of force in Iran or against any other Islamic nation.

Shiite Moslems in Lebanon—unofficially estimated to constitute about 900,000 of the country's population of less than 3 million—took to the streets of Beirut firing automatic weapons into the air in celebration of the raid's failure. Loudspeakers of mosques in the city resounded with the Moslem battle-cry, "God is Great."

Meanwhile, the ongoing dispute between Iran and Iraq, which is being carried on by proxy in Beirut by partisans of each side, led to four injuries today when a bomb rocked the offices of the Iraqi news agency. Clashes in the Lebanese capital between pro-Iran Shiites and pro-Iraqi groups have claimed the lives of 15 persons in recent weeks.

In Bahrain, an American banker noted the loss of American prestige from the raid and said "this kind of thing has to make people here feel they can rely less and less on the United States in times of difficulties."

He said that the misadventure in the Iranian desert only added to other doubts about the United States. He specifically mentioned Washington's decisions last November to freeze

Iran's government assets in the United States. Arab Gulf states have traditionally kept large amounts of reserves in U.S. banks or in U.S. government securities and now fear seizure of these assets should their policies run afoul of Washington.

Billions of dollars were transferred from American to European banks in the months after the freeze was announced.

The Bahrain disturbances today took on an openly anti-American tone.

The Tehran-backed Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, which has revived the deposed Shah's claims to this island, every day since Wednesday has succeeded in causing demonstrations either in this capitol or in Shiite Moslem villages principally to the north.

Up to 1,500 Shiite Bahrainis have been involved in the biggest demonstrations, according to diplomats.

The first three days of disturbances were called officially to mourn the al-

Criticism, Protests in Bahrain

leged death of Ayatollah Mohamed Bakr Sadr, whom Tehran claims was killed by Iraqi authorities.

Villagers told eyewitnesses today that the alleged U.S. use of the airport here prompted the disturbances despite quick and apparently convincing government denials of an Israeli Radio broadcast to that effect early yesterday.

Radio Tehran played back the Voice of Israel allegations that American C130 aircraft had refueled here on their way in and out of Iran. That was enough to set the stage for today's disturbances despite government and diplomatic assertions that any such use would have been certain to attract attention at the airport, which functions 24 hours a day.

One prominent American banker expressed "shock" at the Israeli radio broadcast and said he felt they were a deliberate effort to stir up trouble here.

Meanwhile, diplomats are also wor-

ried that Ghotbzadeh's visit here sometime next week could turn out to be a show of force for the Iranian revolution that would embarrass the Bahraini government.

Information Minister Tariq Almoayed underlined in an interview the distress of many Arab Gulf regimes in both "appreciating the American predicament" over the hostages' continued detention and insisting that Bahrain's relations with Iran were "good."

One diplomat summed up the Bahraini dilemma, by saying, "no one on this side of the Gulf is very comfortable with the Iranians, but no one wants to stand up and say so in public."

The information minister said Bahrain had "no proof that the Americans abused the privileges" for refueling and provisioning that the Navy's five-ship flotilla enjoys here.

He thus seemed to be downplaying any suggestion that Bahrain would

feel constrained to deprive the U.S. Navy of those privileges in the wake of the raid and local demonstrations.

Referring to the Shiite protests here this week, the minister said, "Bahrain is an open society" where "ideas are expressed in an open and normal manner."

The only positive result of the abortive U.S. operation was the hope that the United States would now be forced back to diplomacy to solve the crisis with Iran.

Said Almoayed, "I can't see how the operation could have succeeded without bloodshed." And bloodshed by American arms in Iran, he did not need to say outright, could well have caused further bloodshed and serious political instability not only here in Bahrain but also in every other regime on the Western side of the Gulf.

Washington Post Cairo correspondent Edward Cody and special correspondent Nora Boustany in Beirut also contributed to this story.