

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

state activities. In 1984, for example, the legislature rejected a resolution that forbade the city of Washington, D.C., from divesting from firms doing business in South Africa.

Shuman suggests that the federal government tighten controls over the private export of weapons and other "serious international mischief." But Washington, he adds, must concede that foreign affairs have become "too complicated to [be] run effectively as a monopoly."

### *Tripoli's Troubles*

"The United States and Libya" by Edward Schumacher, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1986-87), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

"If a coup takes place, that is all to the good."

So said Secretary of State George Shultz after U.S. bombers, on April 15, 1986, hit military targets in the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi. His remark, says Schumacher, a *New York Times* correspondent, bespoke an unnecessary Reagan administration "obsession": getting rid of Libya's leader, Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi.

Libya, Schumacher stresses, has enjoyed little peace or prosperity throughout its long history. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, and Turks have all overrun or occupied this dry, barren land. The Italians



"America is filth," declared Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi last September in a speech celebrating the 17th anniversary of his rule. Libya, he might have added, is a sparsely populated desert. Just four million people inhabit a land one-fifth the size of the United States.

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seized Libya in 1911; during World War II, Allied forces took over. The British granted the United Kingdom of Libya its independence in 1951.

The 1959 discovery of oil soon made Libya rich. But the aging King Idris failed to solidify his political support. On September 1, 1969, the 27-year-old Qaddafi led a successful and bloodless coup.

Qaddafi, Schumacher says, represented "a muddled mix of Nasserist nationalism, Western anarcho-syndicalism, and Bedouin desert egalitarianism." The colonel championed his Third International Theory as an alternative to capitalism and communism; his unique program calls for the abolition of government, private profit, and mandatory schooling.

Life under Qaddafi, however, has not been easy.

Slumping oil revenues (from \$22 billion in 1980 to \$5 billion in 1986) have forced Tripoli to trim government salaries and welfare payments, and cancel housing and road projects. Ordinary Libyans wait in long lines to buy groceries and other consumer goods.

Qaddafi has angered army officers by freezing promotions, ending housing and travel privileges, and favoring the civilian militia of his "revolutionary committees." In November 1985, one prominent Qaddafi critic, Colonel Hassan Ishkal, was mysteriously slain.

The Reagan administration wants to undercut Soviet influence in Libya. Moscow sells arms to Tripoli, and between 2,000 and 3,000 Soviet military advisers are now deployed with the Libyan armed forces.

What should Washington do? Nothing, says Schumacher. U.S. threats could convince the colonel to give the Soviets what they have long wanted: a naval base on the Mediterranean's southern shore. Besides, Qaddafi's own bumbling may soon destroy his corrupt regime.

## *Poison Gas*

"Chemical Weapons: Restoring the Taboo" by  
Kenneth Adelman, in *Orbis* (Fall 1986), 3508  
Market St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

For years, the West's peace activists have not let anyone forget the horrors of nuclear war. But the worldwide taboo against chemical weapons, warns Adelman, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, is fading.

Indeed, the development and combat use of poison gas is spreading. In 1963, just five nations, including the Soviet Union and the United States, owned chemical weapons. Fifteen states—including Iraq, Libya, Syria, and North Korea—do so today. Since the late 1970s, the Vietnamese have reportedly employed "yellow rain" against guerrillas in Laos and Kampuchea. The Soviets have used it on rebels in Afghanistan. Iraqi troops have unleashed nerve gas against Iranian forces.

Western nations have long condemned chemical warfare. The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 bound signatories to "abstain from the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gas." Yet World War I saw Germany introduce chlorine gas at the battle of Ypres in April 1915. The Allies would soon retaliate in kind. Being gassed was an experience that British war poet Wilfred Owen would never forget: