vious regimes. These included the first president, Maurice Yameogo, and former Prime Minister Joseph Conombo.

In a press conference on Aug. 5, Sankara reviewed his country's foreign policy, giving particular attention to relations with Libya, France, and Ivory Coast.

Describing Bourkina Fasso's relations with Libya as "good, and improving," he added that he did not understand why so many people seemed to fear Libya. And he said the arrival in power of a socialist government in France had done nothing to change French policy on Africa. Sankara asserted that Bourkina Fasso is "willing to improve relations with France," but said this would require "a revision of the concept of cooperation."

Finally, Sankara expressed concern that opponents of his regime were active in neighboring Ivory Coast. He regretted that the Ivory Coast did not have a "revolutionary outlook," but added that Bourkina Fasso had no intention of "giving lessons to, or receiving them from its neighbors."

After independence in 1960, political power in Upper Volta (pop. 6.3 million) alternated between civilian and military government.

The first civilian government of Yameogo was ousted by the military with labor union support in 1966. A civilian government replaced the soldiers in 1970.

Four years later, the soldiers took over again, only to give up the reins of power in 1978. The then-military ruler, Gen. Sangoule Lamizana, called an election and won his bid to become a civilian president.

In 1980, following a bitter confrontation between the labor federation and the new civilian administration, soldiers led by Col. Saye Zerbo intervened and removed Lamizana. Zerbo himself was ousted by junior army officers in 1982 and was replaced by Maj. Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo, who named Sankara prime minister.

Following a crisis in May 1983, during which Sankara was arrested, his supporters in the army overthrew Ouedraogo and freed Sankara, who was declared the head of a new revolutionary government.

Bourkina Fasso, a land-locked country, is one of the world's 10 poorest nations, with a per capita gross national product of only $210 It is also the least literate nation. As many as 95 out of every 100 adults in the country cannot read or write, according to World Bank figures.

—Howard French

U.S./AFRICA

PIPELINE PLAN CREATES CONTROVERSY

WASHINGTON [IPS] A plan to build a 2,112-mile pipeline from Port Sudan on the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean port of Douala, Cameroon, has raised questions here about the intent of the U.S. company backing the project as well as its source of financing.

The Washington-based Trans-Africa Pipeline Company (TAPCO) announced July 18 that it had secured agreement with the Sudanese government to begin the five-and-a-half-foot wide line, which could carry up to four million barrels of oil a day at full capacity. The purpose of the $10 billion project, say TAPCO officials, is to provide a less-costly route and an alternative route for shipments of Middle East oil in case hostilities in the Gulf spread.

At the time of the agreement's signing, Sudanese Minister of Energy and Mines Sharif At-Tuhami called the plan the "strategic dream" of the international oil trade. But syndicated columnist Jack Anderson has alleged that the president of TAPCO, Basil Tsakos, is an international arms merchant who has sold weapons to several Middle East nations.

In an interview with IPS, former TAPCO President Carl Shipley also claimed that Tsakos is a major arms dealer with a criminal record in Greece. Shipley said that he quit TAPCO upon learning of Tsakos' background and because Tsakos refused to divulge where the financing for the pipeline project was being obtained. [Attorney Shipley and his partner, Mariam Smoak, are also registered agents for the South African administration in Namibia.]

Officials at TAPCO were not available for comment, but a Tsakos associate denied to *The Washington Post* that the TAPCO president had any criminal record in Greece or had engaged in any illegal arms transactions.

Anderson also wrote that a U.S. Senator helped Tsakos try to win U.S. government support for the pipeline in 1982 and 1983 at the same time the Greek financier was paying the lawmaker's wife some $40,000 in real estate fees.

That senator, Mark Hatfield, an Oregon Democrat, confirmed he helped arrange meetings for Tsakos with Energy Secretary Donald Hodel and with Howard Kaufman, president of Exxon. In addition, Hatfield said he had discussed the project with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and with Sudanese President Jaafar el Numeiri. But the senator denied any connection between the payments to his wife and his lobbying on behalf of Tsakos.

TAPCO was set up in 1980 to build the project, which at the time was thought to be of great interest to the United States, following the oil price increases after the Islamic revolution in Iran. But Shipley said he began having doubts about Tsakos' intent when the financier was evasive about the source of his financing.

"Tsakos is supplying funding through the Bank of Luxembourg," said Shipley, "But he won't disclose whose money the Bank of Luxembourg is using." The financiers of the project, he suggested, may be trying to "repatriate dollars back to the land from which they came," or the money could be coming from illegal drug or gambling opera-

AFRICAN PIPELINE OFFERS 'SECURE' OIL PASSAGE

[AN] Construction work will start next year on a pipeline to transport oil from the Arabian Peninsula across three central African nations, according to Basil Tsakos, the controversial president of TAPCO (Trans-Africa Pipeline Company), which signed a pact with the Sudanese government July 18 to do the job.

Interviewed last week in London by the BBC, Tsakos said the pipeline might one day become the only way to supply Arabian oil to the West. He said the plan to transport oil from Sudan's Red Sea town of Port Sudan to the Atlantic port of Douala in Cameroon will serve the Western world by considerably reducing distance and by offering a reliable and secure flow.

Tsakos, a Greek financier, said the financial and security problems posed by the Iran-Iraq war make the project attractive. He referred to recent reported mining of shipping routes and damage to oil tankers and to steeply rising insurance costs as a result of the increasing risks of hauling oil from the Gulf producers.

[Traffic in the Rea Sea and Gulf of Suez, through which most Arab oil must pass on route to Europe and North America, has been hampered in recent days by a series of unexplained explosions. American demolition experts and minesweeping helicopters were sent to Egypt to investigate, and President Hosni Mubarak asked Britain to supply minesweeping ships.]

"You can torpedo an oil tanker," Tsakos told the BBC, "but you cannot destroy a pipeline."

He said construction could cost $15 billion but declined to specify any sources of funding.

He said concessions had been signed with both Central African Republic and Cameroon and that discussions were in progress between TAPCO and West Germany, France, Holland and Japan to supply the needed equipment.

On the project's feasibility, about which many experts have doubts, Tsakos argued that 10-year studies had convinced the Washington-based TAPCO the pipeline would be viable. Further engineering surveys will be completed within the next year, and oil may begin flowing five years from now, he said.

The 64-inch pipeline, at full capacity, could reportedly carry the equivalent of 80% of Saudi Arabia's daily output. It will have 18 pumping stations along the route to boost the flow and more than 22,000 workers will be employed in pipeline-related services throughout the three nations, according to Tsakos. ■