

Carter policy turns Iran over to the Soviet Union

by Judith Wyer

It is the evaluation of *Executive Intelligence Review* that Iran will become a client state of the Soviet Union within a matter of weeks as the direct result of policies pursued by the Carter administration

A total vacuum of power is developing in Iran which, one way or the other, will soon be filled. From every indication, the Carter regime has not moved in the direction of the one available option that might allow a stable, noncommunist government to develop in Iran, namely, a government led by former Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar, elements of the Iranian military, and centrist political forces including, possibly, Ayatollah Shariatmadari's followers in Azerbaijan.

Instead, Carter and his advisers have opted for direct confrontation with the U.S.S.R. in an area in which they are easily outgunned and outmaneuvered. The United States is still insisting on shaping an alliance with radical Muslim fundamentalists in Iran while, at the same time, threatening to use force openly. Two incompatible options remain under consideration by the U.S. administration:

1. To precipitate a direct military showdown in the coming weeks by blockading Iran with the U.S. navy laying mines in the Persian Gulf, possibly landing U.S. forces on Iranian territory. This is certain to provoke an immediate Soviet military counteraction, as *Pravda* warned earlier this week.

2. To seek an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood extremists like former Foreign Minister Abolhasan Bani-Sadr and other anti-communist elements of the religious establishment by engineering a U.N.-mediated deal to release the hostages. Given the rampant anti-Americanism in Iran, however that solution is viewed as totally unworkable.

These contradictions are calculated by Washington

and its London ally to induce a U.S.-Soviet showdown over Iran. A superpower crisis in the gulf region could then be used to bludgeon continental Europe and Japan into breaking with their strong pro-detente foreign policies. These governments have been vocal opponents of Carter's call for sanctions against the U.S.S.R.

Outgunned ...

From Washington this week, there are growing indications of apprehension over a future Soviet military move into Iran. The *Baltimore Sun* Washington correspondent, Henry Trehitt, wrote that the Soviets have strengthened their troop presence to 25,000 on the Iranian-Afghanistani border. This is triple the number Soviet troops there last week. Trehitt quotes White House press secretary, Jody Powell, that the two Soviet motorized divisions near the Iranian border at Herat are along the historic "invasion route to Tehran . . ." Prior to the Soviet build up on Iran's northeast border with Afghanistan, the Soviets have slowly increased their troops along their own common border with Iran.

Just after the Soviet backed coup in Afghanistan last month, Soviet ambassador to Tehran, Vladimir Vinogradov, quietly informed both Ayatollah Khomeini and Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh that the Soviet troops along the Iranian-Soviet border would move into their country immediately if the U.S. attempted to move into Iran. Such an option has been publicly weighed by administration officials as a means of securing the release of the American hostages now in their third month of captivity.

President Carter, according to the *New York Post*, Jan. 13, angrily responded to a comment from Ghotbzadeh that the hostages would be held indefinitely, by discussing a U.S. military move into the gulf. The options discussed were a military move into Kharg Island, the loading zone for Iranian oil exports, or a military occu-

pation of the tiny gulf island Abu Musa, which would become a base for future U.S. military operations in the gulf.

Many military specialists familiar with the terrain of the gulf, concur that a military move into Iran by the U.S. is logistically very problematic. The Soviets have a major strategic advantage, with 1,500 miles of Iranian border.

The sanctions farce

The effort on the part of Washington to gain a United Nations Security Council okay for imposing economic sanctions against Iran in retaliation for the hostage-taking is now being evaluated as yet another plus for Moscow. Just three days following the sanction initiative, vetoed by the Soviets, the *Washington Post* printed a lengthy analysis headlined, "Iranian Sanctions Could Help Soviets, Backfire on West." The article emphasized that "besides prolonging the ordeal of the American hostages held ... the imposition of sanctions by Japan and major Western European countries risks altering the predominantly Western pattern of trade and expertise. ... The main beneficiaries are likely to be the Soviet Union and its allies, according to informed Iranians and many diplomats."

Senator Henry Jackson, an outspoken advocate of cold war policies, this week almost thanked the Soviets for their veto of the sanctions. Jackson declared that had the sanctions been imposed it would have aided the Soviets politically and economically within Iran, by providing them new diplomatic and trade openings.

Waldheim-Vance option flops

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance has been discretely working with United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to arrange a deal with the Khomeini regime whereby the U.S. would agree to an international tribunal to investigate the crimes of the Shah in return for the release of the hostages. Washington sources reveal that Vance has made three secret trips to U.N. headquarters in New York City in the last two weeks as part of this effort.

Vance has held meetings in Washington with Waldheim, Sudanese Islamic leader Sadiq al-Mahdi, and British intelligence Irish lawyer Sean MacBride, all three of whom have made recent trips to Iran to attempt to arrange for the tribunal with Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh. Vance and company, through such an arrangement, hope to reinforce the positions of the so-called Muslim moderates such as Ghotbzadeh and former foreign minister Ibrahim Yasdi as key figures in the new Iranian government to be formed after the Jan. 25 presidential elections.

But the process of radicalization throughout Iran's population since the Nov. 4 hostage-taking, now makes it impossible for any leading Iranian figure to openly make a deal with Washington. There is increasing evidence that the radical students who have detained the American hostages, for example, are not under the control of Khomeini but are Marxists connected to the growing Iranian leftist movements.

Khomeini's days are numbered

The withdrawal this week of the candidacy of Jaleddin Farsi from the upcoming presidential elections represents a significant setback for Khomeini. Farsi was the candidate of the Islamic Republican Party, Khomeini's party. His withdrawal was forced as a result of a scandal widely publicized within Iran—that his mother was an Afghani and, therefore, he did not qualify to be president. According to the *New York Times*, Khomeini and leading members of the Revolutionary Council are presently considering postponing the Jan. 25 presidential elections in the wake of Farsi's withdrawal.

The remaining candidates for president represent contending political factions within Iran who are in varying degrees at odds with Khomeini. The tension has intensified since the seizing of the Tehran embassy. According to *Le Monde* the vast majority of Iran's population are unhappy with the way Khomeini has handled the hostage situation and "want to end the entire affair."

The leading candidates for president are Economics Minister Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, and former governor general of the oil producing state of Khuzistan Admiral Madani. Informed sources evaluate each of these candidates as having close ties to both American and British intelligence services. Both Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh have been vocal in their disapproval of Khomeini's intransigence in finding a peaceful solution to the hostage problem. Vance and Waldheim have cultivated these two personalities as probable pro-American presidents of Iran.

Underlying the growing tension throughout Iran against Khomeini, well placed Washington sources indicate that the Soviets have been steadily and discretely building up influence. The sources noted that the Soviets are "not just working through the Tudeh Party (Communist Party)" but through "many diverse channels." Indian sources in New Delhi report that if Khomeini attempts to make a deal with the U.S. over the hostages the Soviets "have the leverage" to step up anti-Khomeini violence throughout Iran's tribal minorities.

The trigger which could prompt a fullscale insurrection against the Khomeini regime is the well organized Turkish speaking minorities in Azerbaijan, in northwest Iran. *Le Monde* every day for the last eight has reported

an impending fullscale anti-Khomeini upsurge. *Le Monde* notes that if Azerbaijan blows up it will set off a round of civil unrest in Kurdistan, Baluchistan, Gilan and Khorasan which will encircle Tehran and Qom, the headquarters of Khomeini.

Iran's second most powerful Ayatollah, Shariatmadari, is the religious leader in Azerbaijan and commands a powerful following in other minority regions. Earlier this month, Khomeini put Shariatmadari under house arrest and has forbidden him to leave Qom to return to Tabriz in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has historically been a center for Soviet penetration into Iran and with Soviet aid, seceded from Iran following World War II. It is the center for the underground guerilla activities of both the Fedayeen al Khalq and the Mujahadeen al Khalq which, according to Iranian sources, have recently developed indirect relations with the Soviet Union.

The projected folly of U.S. deployments in the Indian Ocean

by Uwe Parpart

Count Schlieffen, the chief of the German General Staff before World War I, was known to demand of his officers that they strictly adhere to his precept of "mehr sein als scheinen" (to be more than you appear to be). U.S. strategic thinking, judging by the policy statements and proposals of Cyrus Vance and Harold Brown or Henry Kissinger at this point, is committed to exactly the opposite principle: substituting pathetic bluster and "aura of power" for the exercise of real strategic options and the actual deployment of credible force, neither of which are available in the context of present U.S. Middle East policy. Moreover, and perhaps most dangerous, there is the lingering suspicion that neither President Carter nor his national security advisor so-called are fully capable of making the distinction between "sein" and "schein" (reality and appearance).

With the move in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union put in place a strategic counter to the NATO decision to deploy Pershing II missiles in Western Europe and to the apparent U.S. commitment to go all the way with the China card. But at the same time, the massive military incursion into Afghanistan was intended to call the bluff

on U.S. Middle East policy and to deliver a clear warning against the further employment of the illusory "Islamic Card."

After recovering from the first shock over the Soviet move—"The Russians lied to me!!"—the Carter administration has now made it clear through its activities and statements of the last week that they fail to understand the full scope of the Soviet warning and intend to deliberately ignore the part that is comprehensible to them.

There is no other explanation of Carter's foolish praise of "Islamic Fundamentalism" over the "evils of atheism," presumably designed to encourage the formation of an Islamic anti-Soviet bloc, and of moves to acquire U.S. military bases on and in the proximity of the Arab Peninsula to sprinkle such an Islamic alliance with reassuring U.S. military presence. Thus teams of Pentagon and State Department experts are touring East Africa and various Arabian countries to find suitable bases.

Mombasa in Kenya, the former Soviet base at Berbera in Somalia, and a once British-owned landing strip on the island of Masirah off the coast of Oman are being inspected, though in no case have any of the target countries so far agreed to receive U.S. facilities and personnel. Also under discussion is the former Israeli Sinai base of Etzion; but this is hushed up, since Anwar Sadat is persona non grata among several of Mr. Carter's desired Islamic fundamentalist allies.

Reality of Afghan question

Now look at the military strategic realities in this situation, as well as at a significant point of history—the latter first. After a century of confrontation between Czarist Russia and Britain over control of strategically crucial Afghanistan (the *issue* was undisturbed British rule in India), the two powers finally agreed in the early 1920s to treat Afghanistan as an essentially neutral buffer state between Russian and British interests in the area.

The Soviet choice to now seize that buffer state, representing today the same unique strategic values as in the 19th century, was clearly a major strategic move which only a fool would be tempted and preoccupied to counter on a local basis. Indira Gandhi's now openly voiced support for the Soviet operation only makes the U.S. Indian Ocean game so much more ludicrous. Of course, one can in this kind of situation always count on Henry Kissinger to come up with the most manic, outrageous, and provocative proposal—that the United States should demand base rights in Pakistan.

To soberly evaluate the military realities in the Arabian-Indian Ocean theater, it is best to apply another of Count Schlieffen's precepts: in annual maneuvers designed to test the viability of strategic and tactical plan-