

Washington plays with Asian insurgencies

by Daniel Sneider

Is the Reagan administration contemplating backing a wave of Kissinger-style insurgencies in Asia, indeed throughout the Third World? This question was raised when CIA Director William Casey flew into Tokyo on March 7 for a semisecret visit, his presence only revealed when he met with Japanese Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki two days later.

According to informed sources in Washington, Casey was chairing a meeting of agency station chiefs from the East Asian region, chiefly to assess both the turbulent situation in China and a proposal to back an anti-Vietnamese Cambodian insurgent "united front" under the nominal leadership of former Prince Sihanouk.

While Casey was in Japan, the Reagan administration began to issue signals that they were considering a British-sponsored plan to step up military aid to the Afghan rebels and to the Pakistani military dictatorship of General Zia Ul-Haq, which backs the rebels. The more than week-old hijacking of a Pakistani Airlines plane by persons claiming to represent anti-Zia activists is being built up, accompanied by the usual charges of Soviet involvement, as a cause célèbre to help justify moves on the Pakistan-Afghan front.

Not unconnected are reports from Washington of efforts to revive U.S. military and political backing for South African-backed UNITA insurgents in Angola.

A closer analysis of these developments, particularly in light of the defense budget just announced by the administration, lends credibility to the idea that a Third World policy based on backing local war/insurgency operations against the Soviet Union and Soviet-linked

regimes in the Third World is being formulated. The defense budget (see Economics) contains almost nothing in the way of basic research and development for new weapons systems, merely replacing some outmoded existing systems and concentrating on a tactical armed force whose purpose could only be deployment into Third World "half-war" situations.

The idea that America's basic scientific and technological capacity can be allowed, even encouraged, to devolve and that U.S. national security can be protected by a multiple "rapid deployment force" was a basic approach of the previous administration. The continuation of this policy under the new administration is surprising to many. However, it is coherent with the continuation of the Global 2000 policy, also inherited from the Carter administration, which openly advocated the reduction of global population levels by some 2 billion by the end of the century. And it is coherent with Global 2000's current repackaging in "national security" terms, as reported in our National section.

Protecting the front-line states

The policy of fostering multiple war and insurgency situations in the Third World is translated into geopolitics in the context of "resource war" and aiding "front-line" states against Soviet aggression.

High on the list of front-line countries designated for stepped-up U.S. military and political backing are Pakistan and Thailand. Pakistan has acquired this role due to its use as a staging ground for the Afghan rebels and the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. Thailand

is the base of operations for the Chinese-run Pol Pot Khmer Rouge insurgents who were driven out of Kampuchea (Cambodia) by the Vietnamese and their Kampuchean allies after the Khmer Rouge had murdered 3 million of the population.

It is interesting, then, that one of few bits of information to come out so far on the Casey visit was the report that in his meeting with the Japanese premier, he had urged increased Japanese economic aid to both Thailand and Pakistan.

Japanese officials also reported that Casey said that "the future of Cambodia" should be a subject of discussion when the Japanese foreign minister visits Washington later this month. It was officially stated by the U.S. embassy that Casey discussed China and Southeast Asia with both the Japanese and with U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield.

The "future of Cambodia" is an obvious code for the moves now afoot to revive the anti-Vietnamese insurgency by forming a new "united front" which would install Prince Sihanouk again as a figurehead for the murderous Khmer Rouge. This effort to revive the legitimacy of the Pol Pot regime and its military usefulness against the Vietnamese is mainly Chinese-sponsored, but for any real effect it will need backing from the United States and countries in the region.

Sihanouk is presently conducting talks with Pol Pot's right-hand man Khieu Samphan, the "premier" of "Democratic Kampuchea," as the deposed regime is still called. The outcome of those talks is difficult to predict, as has been indicated in a stream of interviews issuing from Sihanouk in North Korea, where he lives under the protection of Kim Il Sung. Sihanouk's main concern is whether this "united front" could end up like the last one the Chinese sponsored, which found him a captive houseguest of the Pol Pot regime while they butchered almost half the population, including a number of his own family.

The State Department spokesman, replying to a question about possible U.S. support for such a front,

told reporters that the administration will make a judgment after the front is formed, based on "the form" it takes—meaning how deeply the bloody hands of the Pol Potists are concealed—and on "the views of our allies in the area," which leaves room to use backing from Japan and pro-Peking regimes in Thailand and Singapore to justify U.S. support.

Washington's ambassador to Thailand, Morton Abramowitz, was reported meeting with one other prospective "front" participant, former Premier Son Sann, the only other major Khmer insurgent leader not tied to Pol Pot, to sound out his views.

On the Afghan front

A much more intense, and credible, lobbying effort has been mounted around the Afghan-Pakistan front. One product of those efforts was displayed on ABC-TV on March 9 when President Reagan stated that he would "consider" arms aid to the Afghan rebels, whom he pointedly called "freedom fighters."

While the President ducked the question of Soviet response, Moscow was quick to reply the following day with a *Pravda* commentary which predictably took the response as proof of Soviet (and non-Soviet) charges that the United States has been supplying weapons all along to an effort to "interfere" in the affairs of Afghanistan, an effort they say led to the presence of Soviet forces.

The headquarters of the Afghan rebel lobby is in London, where they have been playing the "Great Game" on the Afghan frontier for more than 200 years. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's visit to Washington this month reportedly had Afghanistan as one item on the agenda, with London pushing for a general military buildup in the Persian Gulf region, where Pakistan is seen as a key strong point. The Afghan rebel cause serves as a basis for a strengthened military alliance with the unpopular and unstable Zia regime in Pakistan, which will balk at any upgrading of existing weapons supplies to the rebels unless Pakistan is guar-



Soviet helicopter downed by Afghan tribalists.

anted some security against likely Soviet response.

The *London Express* reported that Thatcher urged Reagan to convert a 1959 executive agreement on mutual security between the U.S. and Pakistan into a formal treaty, a standing demand of the Zia regime. British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Peter Blacker returned recently from a visit to Pakistan to declare that his government and the junta there had a "similarity of views" on Afghanistan, and that Britain was ready to provide arms to Pakistan and to help the rebels more "if the U.S. leads the way."

London has sponsored a public relations campaign around this which included a visit to Washington, just preceding Thatcher's, by Afghan rebel leader Sayid Gailani, who also stopped off in Saudi Arabia and Egypt (the main source of weapons for the rebels) on the way. Gailani was wined and dined around Washington, taken up to the Hill to impress congressmen, and down to the State Department for meetings with Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs Veliotis.

Gailani was shepherded around town by "hawk" luminaries like former Defense Intelligence Agency head Daniel Graham and some cronies from the American Security Council. But the real controller of the show, and of Gailani, is Lord Bethell, a top man in British intelligence with experience in the region as well as a controller of Polish and Soviet "dissident" groups. Gailani's usefulness is that he styles himself a "moderate religious leader," more urbane than the Khomeini types found among the rebels.

His allegiances to London, where his family lives in what sources describe as a "posh apartment," date back to his father, in the pay of the British Secret Intelligence Service during the days of the British Raj in India.

Lord Bethell, who accompanied his Afghan friend on the visit, claimed on March 1 in a *London Times* article written during the visit, that the Reagan administration was "quietly and slowly . . . moving towards openly supplying equipment" to the rebels. Bethell admitted that the actual aim is to draw Reagan into a pact with General Zia's regime: "Pakistan, of course," he wrote, "is the problem. . . . That is why [U.S.] Ambassador Arthur Hummel has been recalled from Pakistan. A package, to which Saudi Arabia would contribute, is being put together and an offer to Pakistan should be made soon."

The problem of General Zia

The Zia "problem" highlights the fact that the emergent Third World insurgency/counterinsurgency policy of the administration, and of Haig and Weinberger in particular, is not in any way a policy to stabilize

areas of conflict in the developing sector. In the cases of both Cambodia and Pakistan-Afghanistan, the principal impact of such policies is to heighten destabilizations, thereby creating precisely the conditions that further the goal of Global 2000 genocide among Third World populations.

In the Pakistan case, the Zia regime is highly unstable because of its brutal and unpopular nature. It came to power in a 1977 coup which ousted the democratically elected regime of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and then subsequent to that, executed the popular leader. An American decision to rush backing to Zia, beyond the considerable support already given, is likely to increase the unpopularity of the regime and the turbulence caused by its eventual fall. Most important, it will worsen relations between India and Pakistan, generating a conflict in which China, which is allied to Pakistan, and the Soviet Union, which maintains friendly ties to India, could ultimately become involved. The result may suit the depopulation fanatics, but not U.S. national interest.

The ongoing hijacking incident underlines the argument we are making. The regime, since early to mid-February, has been facing a rising tide of public protest (see *EIR*, March 10), spearheaded by the Pakistan Peoples Party, founded by Bhutto and now headed by his widow and daughter. The PPP is leading a nine-party alliance that covers a wide spectrum of almost all political parties united to end the military regime and restore constitutional rule. The all too timely ("too good to be true" was one Pakistani official's private response) hijacking has been used by the regime to launch a new wave of political repression, with widespread arrests, including those of Mrs. Bhutto, her daughter, and 120 other leaders and organizers.

The line emerging from the regime, and ultimately from Pakistani military intelligence (whose ties to their British trainers are still fresh), is to link the Bhutto family to the terrorists, in particular one of the Bhutto sons, Murtaza, who has been active in antiregime activity in exile outside the country. The hijackers claim to be members of a hitherto unknown organization called Al-Zulfikar, named after the late premier, which the regime was quick to label the "armed-struggle wing" of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

The junta also directed a shotgun scattering of charges against the Karmal regime in Afghanistan for its handling of the hijacking situation when the plane landed there. The charges, including accusations that weapons were put aboard at that time, were clearly intended to implicate the Afghan government in the incident. More accurate are reports from Pakistani sources in London that the hijackers are agents provocateurs run by military intelligence.