

State Department treats Egypt like Iran

by Our Special Correspondent

High-level sources report a major fight in the upper echelons of the Reagan administration over developments in Egypt. At issue is the fact that senior officials of the U.S. embassy in Cairo are establishing important channels of contact to the fanatical Muslim fundamentalist opposition to President Hosni Mubarak's government.

At the center of this operation is the same State Department senior official responsible for writing off the Shah of Iran and paving the way for Ayatollah Khomeini: Henry Precht.

Henry Precht was stationed in Iran, and then moved to the State Department Middle East section where he stayed for the duration of the Teheran hostage crisis. He was then detailed to the U.S. embassy in Cairo.

High-level Middle East sources say that Precht is now working with the same forces responsible for the overthrow of the Shah and the subsequent holocaust in Iran.

"To be, is a democratic state moving forward to greater democracy, security, and stability. Not to be, is dictatorship and the tyranny of suppression and ignorance," is the way a columnist described Egypt in a recent edition of the daily newspaper, *Al-Akhbar*.

Egypt is currently acting to contain a swelling tide of Muslim revolutionary fervor, spearheaded by the group of Iranian/Libyan-backed fundamentalists who call for the establishment of an Islamic state. The government is taking the matter seriously, and moving in the right direction as far as handling the problem is concerned.

Recently, the government banned a demonstration planned by Sheikh Hafez Salama, who wanted to hold a march with participants carrying the Holy Koran and demanding the application of Islamic law (*Sharia*).

President Mubarak stated that all attempts at destabilization would be "firmly and decisively confronted."

Who are the fundamentalists?

In addition to the Muslim Brotherhood, comprised of two groups, there are two fundamentalist movements in Egypt: Takfir wa Hidra (Repudiation and Renunciation) and Al Jihad (Holy War). Both are very active and supported by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Al Jihad is a militant organization which was formed in

1979 by Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman to carry out Khomeini's terrorism in Egypt. Its first assignment was to assassinate the late Shah of Iran when he fled to Egypt. Later, the group tried to bomb the Shah's grave. This is the group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat.

Takfir wa Hidra, on the other hand, is the fundamentalists' propaganda arm. Their pamphlets are everywhere in Egypt and their magazines and other publications are distributed worldwide. In Europe, the Iranian embassies' propaganda sections are in charge of distributing their material.

Khomeini's financial support to these two organizations, Al Jihad and Takfir wa Hidra, is an estimated \$10 million, which does not include weaponry, which the groups receive through their Libyan channels.

The Muslim Brotherhood is divided into two factions. The main Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was banned by the late Gamal Abdul Nasser in the 1960s, then legalized by the late President Anwar Sadat, who later had second thoughts and jailed their leader, Omar Telemansis. But once again, the ban on the Muslim Brotherhood was lifted by President Mubarak, and Telemansis was again set free.

In the last election, this Muslim Brotherhood faction participated in the parliamentary elections and had nine of its candidates elected through the Wafd Party.

Wafd is one of the two opposition parties in Egypt; the other being the National Progressive Assembly Party, which has shifted towards the left. The Wafd Party, led by Fuad Seraddin, was well known during the regime of King Farouk, before Nasser. Wafd has historically attracted intellectuals and technocrats, and it advocates separation of church and state.

The other faction of the Muslim Brotherhood is primarily supported by Muammar Qaddafi and his international terrorist connections. Most of their members have received exclusive training either from the Popular People's Committees in Libya or through them, in North Korea, East Germany, the Soviet Union, and Syria.

Some of their terrorists were trained in Iran in late 1979 and early 1980 by Mohammed Montazeri, son of the Ayatollah Montazeri, and by Khalkhali, the hanging judge, who is a member of the radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood.

This group has two recruiting centers in the Western Hemisphere: Malta and Switzerland. Through these two centers, Libya has hidden its terrorists as "sleepers" for future actions. By watching these two centers, certain intelligence agencies were able to uncover the plot by Qaddafi to kill Libyan opposition leader Bakoush, now in exile in Egypt.

The fundamentalist movement and the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist factions are very well coordinated, and their activities pose a serious danger to both the Egyptian government and Egyptian society.

If they are about to obtain the backing of the U.S. State Department, as reports would indicate, the danger is serious indeed.