

London's flashpoint for World War III

Britain and Brzezinski push NATO coup in Iran

The political balance in Iran this week tipped dangerously close to a bloody NATO-backed coup d'etat as Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar fought to hold together his new government.

The *Washington Post* reported an "intense pattern of rotation of Army units around Iran" that reflected pre-coup deployments, and intelligence sources reported that they are "extremely apprehensive" about the threat of a putsch by senior military officers.

According to several sources, the chain of command for the looming coup d'etat runs from a clique of Iranian generals around General Khosrowdad and General Oveissi, to Iran's Ambassador to the U.S. Ardeshir Zahedi (who is currently in Iran), to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's national security advisor, who speaks daily by telephone to Zahedi. Brzezinski, in turn, gets his marching orders from London and Canada.

A coup in Iran is almost certain to touch off a major crisis in that country, spilling over into neighboring countries and sparking a regional catastrophe. Immediately, it would threaten to pull the U.S. and the USSR into a direct, thermonuclear confrontation like the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962.

Such a confrontation is the immediate strategic objective of the London bankers who instigated and financed the Iran crisis in the first place. Still smarting from their recent defeat at Phnom Penh, and the set-

backs dealt out by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and France's Giscard at this week's four-power summit meeting in Guadeloupe, the British geopoliticians have shifted their major theatre of operations to the volatile Middle East and Persian Gulf region.

Along with London mouthpiece Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger, the Zionists, the Kennedy machine, and the NATO apparatus are screaming for Carter to face down the State Department "weaklings" and take the opportunity in Iran for an "eyeball-to-eyeball" confrontation with the USSR.

Since early this week, President Carter — apparently under the influence of Brzezinski's NSC — ordered a pattern of U.S. military deployments that seem to reflect a readiness for conflict over Iran. Extra U.S. warships were ordered into the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, a squadron of F-15 fighter-bombers headed for Saudi Arabia, and part of the U.S. Sixth Fleet crossed into the Black Sea.

Said a West German intelligence officer, "This weekend, I think, we were closer to World War III than even during the Cuban missile crisis."

The Soviet Union has repeatedly warned Washington against interference in Iran. "Certain circles in Washington," said Radio Moscow Jan. 11, "are planning the overthrow of the present Iranian regime to set up a military dictatorship." The

Communist Party daily *Pravda* warned that such actions run counter "to the national security of the Soviet Union."

The Bakhtiar policy

Since taking office, Prime Minister Bakhtiar has outlined a series of major policy shifts, including a halt of oil shipments to Israel and South Africa, an end to martial law, a dismantling of SAVAK, the secret police, and so forth. Most important is the question of when and if the Shah will leave the country — since the military extremists are threatening to launch their coup to back the Shah.

But, in reality, things are more complicated than that. The Shah is, partly at least, a virtual prisoner of this military clique, and there is also evidence that military hardliners and some of the religious fanatics like Khomeini are, ironically, eying a possible rapprochement! Dr. Joseph Malone, a top U.S. British intelligence agent, has been in close touch with both the Zahedi faction and the Khomeini forces in recent weeks.

Toward the end of the week, there were tentative signs that Cyrus Vance and the State Department were moving to cool down the situation in Iran, urging that Washington support Bakhtiar's government at all costs. But the real question is: Will Carter dump Brzezinski?

— Robert Dreyfuss