

International Intelligence

EUROPE

Allies reject Carter's Iran boycott

The Carter administration's call for a trade embargo of Iran and the recall of the allies' ambassadors has brought a muted response and in some cases, outright rejection from the countries the U.S. is counting on: its European allies and Japan. The Foreign Ministers of the nine European Economic Community countries met in Lisbon April 10, and announced that they will not support economic or other sanctions, but will simply "request the Iranian government to release the hostages."

Bonn government spokesman Armin Grünwald stressed April 9 that a recall of the West German ambassador from Teheran "is not under discussion at present." A spokesman from the West German Defense Ministry added that there are still 155 Iranian military trainees in Bonn, and that "no decision has been taken" to repeat the U.S. action in expelling them.

French government officials told the *Christian Science Monitor* that France will "tread cautiously" before committing itself to anything. France maintains close ties with the Iranian government and regards itself as a likely mediator to help solve the crisis.

Even Great Britain is reluctant to support the Carter administration's extreme moves, for fear of jeopardizing the City of London's role as an international financial center, where Iranian petrodollars and those of other oil-producing countries have been invested.

New Italian government toes Carter line

The Italian firm Olivetti is presently preparing a report on "how Italy will perform in case of an oil blockade,"

according to two reliable sources. Italy is gearing up for an explosion of the Middle East. Despite State Department denials, one Italian paper reported last week that Jimmy Carter had telephoned then-acting Prime Minister Cossiga, urging him to put together an Italian government as rapidly as possible in order to back up the U.S. in the event of a blowup in the Middle East.

An April 4 article in *Corriere della Sera* by Luigi Barzani, who was educated in England and worked for the *London Times*, warns that Western Europe must make a major effort to rearm militarily, to become self-reliant against "Soviet aggression." "There is no time to lose," he urged. "Only a serious rearmament effort, which unfortunately will mean a fall in living standards, can prevent Europe from being reduced to the status of Ancient Greece under the Romans.-a-a..."

The *London Financial Times* of April 8 further notes the shift that has taken place in Italy with the new government, noting that although Cossiga may not last long, it is just what is needed to support Britain's claims against France inside the European Economic Community. "Italy could prove a useful ally for Britain in the future," it notes with satisfaction.

U.S.S.R.

Soviet fast-breeder reactor goes on line

The Soviet press agency TASS on April 8 announced that the world's biggest nuclear breeder reactor has already gone into operation at the Beloyarsky power station in the Ural mountains.

The new reactor, with an electrical capacity of 600 megawatts, produces more nuclear fuel than it consumes. This, together with two, conventional boiling-water reactors, raises the installed capacity of the Beloyarsky station to 900 MW.

The new breeder unit is the second commercial reactor of this type to go into operation in the Soviet Union. The first, the 350-megawatt breeder at Shevchenko on the northeast shore of the Caspian Sea, is a dual purpose reactor, used both for electricity generation and desalinization of water.

The Soviet Union's aggressive nuclear program includes the "Atomash" project, which in the near future will mass-produce 1,000 MW nuclear units at Volgodonsk, on the Don River.

Soviets say Carter is "brandishing a torch near a powder keg"

The Soviet press responded harshly to President Carter's decision to break diplomatic relations with Iran and institute new economic sanctions.

The United States is "brandishing a torch near a powder keg," commented *Pravda* April 10, and is trying to force Western Europe and Japan to go along with its measures. *Radio Moscow* reported that a bill has been introduced in the Congress which would enable the U.S. President to punish countries which refuse to go along with U.S. foreign policy measures.

The Soviet news agency Tass declared that Washington is only seeking a pretext to heighten tension in the region, and "they must be ready to see this policy turn against themselves." Tass quoted Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev: the U.S.S.R. cannot tolerate a foreign military intervention in Iran, on its own borders.

Another Tass statement accused the United States of purposefully inviting the Shah of Iran to the U.S. in order to provoke actions that would aggravate U.S.-Iranian relations.

West German Radio April 10 quoted an Iraqi newspaper, also charging the United States with manipulating the Iran crisis to further the destabilization of the entire region.

Briefly

● **CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT** of West Germany said in an interview with the newspaper *Muencher Merkur* April 5 that the western alliance must find a way to guarantee that Afghanistan will not be used as a launching point for attacks against the Soviet Union. Only this would make a Soviet troop withdrawal possible, he said. The interview was reported by *Radio Moscow*.

● **SYRIAN AND ISRAELI** jets clashed over the territory of southern Lebanon April 10 after an Israeli invasion of parts of Lebanon's south. The new fighting began after a Palestinian terrorist raid, which according to French sources may have been launched by the Israeli intelligence service as a pretext for action. The Israeli military have also stepped up troop deployments into the so-called bufer zone area just across the Lebanese border with Israel. As well, Israeli fighters bombed the southern Lebanese town of Tyre in retaliation for the terrorist raid.

New fighting was also reported in the northern Syrian towns of Aleppo and Hama where the Muslim Brotherhood secret society has been active in terrorist attacks on Syrian officials. Syria has accused Israel and the CIA of sponsoring the attacks.

● **PRANAB MUKERJEE**, India's Commerce Minister, visited Paris this past week. The visit is a followup to the visit of French President Giscard d'Estaing to India this past January. On the agenda are a wide spectrum of economic deals which were left to be worked out by such follow-up consultations.

MIDDLE EAST

Sadat offers U.S. facilities for attack on Persian Gulf

Egypt's President Anwar Sadat yesterday offered the use of Egyptian facilities for the U.S. military in case the United States sought to send forces into Iran and the Persian Gulf. Sadat said that the Arab Gulf states "are shaking," and that they need reinforcement from a tougher United States.

On April 5, just before the Sadat visit to Washington, General Lew Allen, commander of the U.S. Air Force, concluded a four-day visit to Egypt where he toured Egyptian facilities before going on to Saudi Arabia. During his visit, Gen. Allen was hosted by his Egyptian counterpart, General M. S. Abdel Moneim. But on April 6, one day after Allen's departure, Gen. Moneim died "of a heart attack," according to Egyptian accounts.

Joseph Kraft, writing in the *Washington Post*, reported that the Egyptian air force recently attempted a coup d'etat that was "narrowly averted." The reported action followed a clash said to have taken place between Egyptian and Ethiopian jets over Sudan, in which Egypt was badly defeated.

ASIA

Diplomacy seeks Afghan-Pakistan talks

The Indian capital of New Delhi was crowded with visitors recently, including the simultaneous presence of Cuban Foreign Minister Malmierca, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong,

and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin. On the agenda of all three was Afghanistan and Cuban-led efforts to set up talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan to seek a solution to the present crisis. Malmierca was on his second trip to the region in the past two weeks. The first round took him to Moscow, Kabul, and Islamabad. The second to Kabul and New Delhi, where he met for an hour with Mrs. Gandhi and delivered a letter from Castro to the Indian prime minister.

Right after his departure, Indian special envoy Swaran Singh took off for Islamabad, arriving there April 10. Firyubin's stop was unscheduled, coming at the end of a long swing by the Soviets' top Asian trouble shooter, through Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Burma.

Clearly, the Soviet Union is seeking some forum to put Pakistan on the spot and force the Zia regime into negotiations. The pressure on Zia is intense, coming from inside as well as outside the country, with the Soviets hinting that trouble could come to the border with Afghanistan if aid to Afghan rebels is not halted soon.

Zia regime releases Mrs. Bhutto

Begum Bhutto, the wife of the late, murdered Pakistani premier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was ordered released from "house arrest" by the government of General Ziaul Haq, who overthrew her husband in a military coup two years ago, and subsequently had him hanged despite broad international protests.

Pakistani sources say the lifting of the detention of Mrs. Bhutto was done not out of kindness, but came the night before a Sind court was due to order her release on an appeal she had filed with her daughter, Benezir, also under arrest.

Pakistani officials reportedly feared mass demonstrations at the courthouse where the two Bhuttos were to appear to hear the judgment.