

INTERVIEW

Richard Cottam on his thwarted Iranian plans

A colleague of University of Pittsburgh Professor Richard Cottam has informed the EIR of Cottam's latest activities: "deprogramming" Iranian exiles into "accepting Khomeini and the Iranian revolution as a fact of life." Cottam is particularly concerned about the role of the EIR in breaking open the "controlled environment" that he and others have been trying to impose on the Iranian exile community—an environment of despair and helplessness.

Cottam, a former State Department official who spent years building the opposition to the Shah in Iran, was the personal contact man and controller of Ibrahim Yazdi and Yazdi's understudy, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh. Excerpts from the following conversation with Cottam have been made available to the EIR.

Q: Have you seen the recent charges by Empress Farah accusing Brzezinski of being behind the Shah's over-

throw in the interests of playing the Islamic card against the Soviets?

Cottam: No, I haven't seen those yet. Her charges sound to me like LaRouche.

Q: The presidential candidate?

Cottam: Yes. It's bizarre, but LaRouche's craziness has taken over the entire Iranian exile community in this country and abroad. LaRouche puts out this magazine, the *Executive Intelligence Review*, that comes out once a week. And the exiles read it like nothing they've ever read before. It's their Bible. As soon as it's off the press, they buy it up. Everyone reads it. And they believe all of it!

I've been trying to get it across to them that the elaborate conspiracy theories of the *EIR* are not true. But

LETTERS

EIR's Iran coverage draws responses

Dear Editor:

Recent copies of the New Solidarity Press Service have tied my name to some Iranian terrorist groups in the United States and a link supposedly between the two governments!!! A ridiculous fiction and a well-deserved scenario for the TV serials.

I cannot imagine how an instrument of the mass media could act in such an irresponsible manner, accusing people and creating damage to them in every aspect without the slightest investigation from the proper sources of both nations.

During my time in office, I severely dealt with corrupt elements. Talking to your office, it seemed the story is made out of information given by some of those elements cur-

rently living in the U.S. Unfortunately at this time the only option left is to prosecute it through legal channels.

There never was, at any time before and after revolution, any sympathy, not to mention connection, between me and any element of the present ruling group in Iran.

Throughout my life I have been an advocate of principled and moral character and I intend to stay that way.

**Admiral Kamal Habibolahi
Ex-Chief, Imperial Iranian Navy**

The Editor replies:

The best course of action for all parties concerned would be for Ad-

miral Habibolahi to come forward and give a frank and full account of the events in Iran in which he was a participant in the early months of 1979. The Admiral at that time had affixed his signature to an infamous document in which the Iranian General Staff proclaimed its neutrality in the contest between the then duly constituted Iranian State and Ayatollah Khomeini.

That declaration of neutrality was instrumental in bringing Khomeini to power and the Admiral cannot evade personal responsibility. Whether he and others of his colleagues were coerced into signing that declaration is not known. The Admiral will be performing a vital public service and assisting in restoring his military honor if he explains publicly the circumstances under which he was made to sign a document that was illegal from the standpoint of both military and civilian law prevailing at the time in Iran. If he was coerced by General Huyser or General Gharabaghi into dignifying that illegal action, both the Iranian

the problem is that they don't listen to me, because they see me as part of the conspiracy, as part of the Muslim Brotherhood. The reason for this is that the *EIR* targeted me once in one of its articles.

What the Iranians here don't realize is that, contrary to what the *EIR* says, Kissinger, Rockefeller, Brzezinski are their best friends, not their enemies. In going after the British, or the National Security Council, they are going after the wrong targets!

Q: What are you focusing on these days vis-à-vis Iran?

Cottam: Since I've become so much of a target, I've had to lay low. I'm now doing theoretical work on conspiracy theories—where they come

from, who picks them up, why they get picked up, how to get rid of them. What I am trying to figure out is how to preempt these conspiracy theories from taking root. If people are aware of their tendency to succumb to conspiracy theories, they become sensitized to them and resist them. It becomes a self-denying process, and the conspiracy theory is rejected.

Q: Have you had any luck with the Iranian exiles with this approach?

Cottam: Unfortunately, not too much. Most of them won't meet with me any more because of the charges put against me. This is because of the *EIR* again. What the *EIR* has written, and the influence it has in the exile community, cuts access for me. And access to Iranians is very impor-

tant for my work.

However, I have spent some time with some individuals in the exile community. I play around with them using the theory I'm developing. I show them that the U.S. did not put Khomeini into power, that the British were not behind the revolution. I tell them that maybe, in the past, the British were influential in Iran, but not any more. Eventually, they get convinced, and it depresses them. Because once they stop believing that the U.S. is behind what happened in Iran, they feel that the situation is hopeless, that there is no way out, and they give up. They realize that the U.S. has no leverage in the situation. They realize that the U.S. is helpless in the face of the Iranian revolution, and so are they.

nation and the world are entitled to know.

Unless the Admiral's position vis-à-vis this specific historical circumstance is clarified, it will be virtually impossible for the *Executive Intelligence Review* to reevaluate the nature of the Admiral's links with the terrorist networks run by the rug-merchant Bahram Nahidian and Mr. Nahidian's controllers, the banker Cyrus Hashemi and Captain Setudeh. Captain Setudeh, after all, was a Habibolahi appointee as the public record shows.

Should the good admiral assist us in clarifying these matters, this publication shall be more than pleased to publish the truth, especially if the truth does honor and justice to Admiral Habibolahi.

Criton M. Zoakos
Editor-in-Chief

Aug. 26, 1980

Dear Sir or Madam:

As counsel for First Gulf Bank

& Trust Limited for Dr. Cyrus Hashemi and for Mr. Reza Hashemi, we are herewith demanding a formal retraction of each and every reference to or naming of our clients published at any time by New Solidarity International Press Service, the U.S. Labor Party and or any affiliated or related organizations including but not limited to *Executive Intelligence Review*, *Investigative Leads*, *New Solidarity Special Report* and any other named and unnamed pamphlets, papers or publication.

References purporting to link our client with propaganda, terrorist activities, drug activities, protest or financial support thereof, or any related activities are wholly false, untrue and defamatory and have caused our clients severe damage, including damage which is as yet uncalculated.

We demand that this retraction be published in the next regular issue of each publication in which our clients' names have appeared and that such retraction appear in as conspicuous and public a manner as that

in which the defamatory statements were published.

O. Jackson Cook

The Editor replies:

Please be advised that before this publication printed any account of your clients' reported activities on behalf of terrorist networks in the United States—accounts based on numerous responsible reports—it visited Mr. Hashemi's offices in New York City for the purpose of verifying or refuting the reports at hand. Mr. Hashemi refused to meet personally with our representative and he instead delegated the interview to a gentleman claiming to be Mr. Hashemi's attorney at the time.

Given the opportunity to review our charges against Mr. Hashemi, that attorney refused to either confirm or deny those charges. We are therefore justified in claiming that the burden of disproving our charges falls upon you.

Criton M. Zoakos
Editor-in-Chief