

## Kissinger sets up a Mideast 'arc of crisis'

by Robert Dreyfuss

In characteristic fashion, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger embarked at the end of December on an unauthorized diplomatic voyage that will carry him to Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Somalia, and Morocco.

Though unofficial, the Kissinger mission was the subject of public controversy within the camp of President-elect Ronald Reagan. On one hand, Reagan himself has personally disavowed Kissinger's visit and refused to lend assistance to the former secretary's effort to resurrect his virtuoso diplomacy; on the other hand, within days of Kissinger's departure, Richard Allen, Reagan's designated National Security Adviser, commented that the administration might find it useful to employ Kissinger in the role of special envoy and adviser.

Despite the divisions in Washington, however, Kissinger may achieve the primary objective of his current visit: the heating up of tensions across a broad "arc of crisis" stretching from central Africa through the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Persian Gulf. By the time Ronald Reagan is sworn in on Jan. 20, a half-dozen crises now simmering in that region may explode, thanks to Dr. Kissinger.

By himself, of course, Kissinger could not manage such an extraordinary series of developments. He is, however, working in close collaboration with the Second International, whose social democrats are Great Britain's traditional allies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, and, at the same time, with important components of the radical and communist movement in the area, including

the Libyan regime of Col. Muammar Qaddafi, radical Palestinians, and the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Muslim Brothers.

### Case study: Libya

Within hours of Kissinger's arrival in Egypt, on the first leg of his voyage, the Egyptian press began a systematic campaign of threats and intimidation aimed at neighboring Libya. In the past, Kissinger is said to have promised Egypt's Anwar Sadat that he would be allowed to seize control of Libya's oil wealth by the force of arms in exchange for Egypt's cooperation in Kissinger's scheme to establish a direct U.S. military presence in the Middle East.

According to intelligence specialists, Egypt is presently preparing an invasion of Libya to reply to alleged provocations from Qaddafi. Qaddafi, a fanatic ruler controlled by the secretive Senussi Brotherhood, whose tentacles reach deep into the African continent, is a close ally of the U.S.S.R.

At the urging of the KGB, the Soviet Union has established an enormous concentration of military personnel and equipment in Libya—at least 6,000 Soviet advisers, more than in any other country outside the Warsaw Pact, and thousands of tanks, personnel carriers, and aircraft.

A confrontation between Egypt and Libya, should it arise, would be a managed conflict. There is not the slightest chance that the U.S.S.R. would allow its Libyan ally to fall to Sadat's armed forces; in fact, in



Unlike 1974, Kissinger was not allowed into Jordan during this trip.

case of Egyptian attack, the U.S.S.R. reportedly has a contingency plan to use KGB-controlled Libyan officers to oust the Qaddafi regime.

But an Egypt-Libya crisis would provide an almost certain pretext for Kissinger to urge the incoming Reagan administration to continue Zbigniew Brzezinski's policy of NATO militarization of the region based on the Egypt-Israel alliance.

### **Kissinger's deal with the KGB**

What Kissinger is seeking in the Middle East is a behind-the-scenes accord with the Soviet KGB faction, especially the Middle East specialists and Orientalists around Middle East veteran KGB General Kim Philby, to divide the region into two separate "spheres of influence." The Egyptian-Libya crisis, worked out in advance between Kissinger and the KGB controllers of Qaddafi, is meant purely to serve as a vehicle for manipulating Reagan into supporting an expansion of U.S. military bases and facilities in the region.

Kissinger seeks to consolidate Egypt and Israel, along with the so-called Rapid Deployment Force, as an axis of control over Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

The Soviet Union, in exchange, would not only get strengthened control over Libya and an expanded role throughout Africa—at the expense of France, whose former colonial allies are endangered by the Libyan subversion campaign—but, at the same time, expects to consolidate its influence in Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

What Kissinger and the KGB have in common is the desire to polarize the area along Cold War lines, and to exclude Western Europe, especially France and West Germany, from playing a significant role in the area. From the Anglo-American side, this policy has taken shape since 1977 with the regional "bloc" approach directed by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Pentagon Policy Planning chief Robert W. Komer. In an interview recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brzezinski suggested that the Persian Gulf would now have to go through a process of militarization and partition into zones in exactly the same way as "happened in Europe between 1945 and 1955."

In Iran, the virtual collapse of the hostage release negotiations and the prospect of trials of the 52 Americans as "spies" raises the danger of a U.S. show of force in the Persian Gulf. Such a rash action would undoubtedly lead to a direct countermove by the U.S.S.R. in northern Iran and an irrevocable polarization of the region.

### **Kissinger influence**

At present, Kissinger does not have any official role in the Reagan administration, and, according to informed sources, he will not get one.

But he is using his Middle East tour, which will end on Jan. 13, as a lever for increasing his influence in the next administration. Following his meeting with Anwar Sadat, Kissinger and the Egyptian president emerged to meet the press, and Sadat told the audience that he had given "certain messages" to Kissinger to deliver to Reagan's circle. Kissinger, who is not known for his modesty, commented, "I shall, of course, report these conversations to the new administration and to its leading personalities."

By giving a message to Kissinger, Sadat was taking a calculated gamble, since it was known that the portly former secretary of state was not making an official visit. Yet Sadat assumed that the risk of insulting Reagan in that manner would be worth taking if it could give Kissinger an inside track with the Reagan transition.

For his part, Kissinger declared that the chief problem in the Middle East was that of "military pressure from the Soviet Union"—although most Middle East analysts consider the Arab-Israeli problem to be the chief concern.

On the issue of the Israeli-Arab conflict, Dr. Kissinger offered his opinion that the key to resolving the problem is to bring Jordan's King Hussein into the Camp David talks. But Kissinger's position was viewed with some skepticism when it was made known that Jordan had refused Kissinger permission even to visit the country on his current trip.