

Reagan follows Carter in support for the fundamentalist mullahs of Iran

by Robert Dreyfuss, Middle East Editor

At the beginning of the Carter administration in 1977, Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Cyrus Vance decided to support "Islamic fundamentalism" as a "bulwark against Communism." Because of the overall U.S. strategic weakness in what Brzezinski called the "arc of crisis," where the Soviet Union had the overwhelming military superiority it would soon demonstrate in Afghanistan, the Carter administration deluded itself into believing that a system of conservative regimes dominated by the clergy of the Muslim Brotherhood Islamic cults in the region from North Africa to Pakistan would strengthen Anglo-American influence.

Carter's policy has failed. But now, less than a year into the Reagan administration, the United States is again trying to implement it.

Prominent Reagan advisers once criticized Carter and Co. for supporting Khomeini. The very same Reagan advisers are now arguing that American support for the "Islamic Republic" is required to halt the Soviet advance in the region. Some opponents of the "Muslim card," such as former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Robert Neumann, have even been summarily dismissed from their posts by Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

This is occurring in a context of renewed tension in the Middle East and South Asian region. Because of the deterioration in East-West relations, following the neutron-bomb decision by Washington, the NATO controversies over the placement of Pershing missiles in Europe, and Haig's support for anti-Soviet crusades in the Caribbean, southern Africa, and Lebanon, the U.S.S.R. is once again putting pressure on Pakistan politically and militarily.

Strategic reality of Iran

Under the direction of British agencies—including the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), the teams of British Orientalists and Iran specialists, and the Anglican Church executive and its Freemasonic branches in the Middle East—the United States and other Western powers are assembling a new government for Iran. Before examining these plans, let us consider first the role of the Soviet Union in Iran.

Within hours after the bombing last week that killed

Iranian President Mohammed Ali Rajai and Prime Minister Javad Bahonar, Soviet President Brezhnev telegraphed his personal condolences to the Ayatollah Khomeini. Moscow had equitable relations with the late Shah's regime, and has no love for Khomeini's insane mullahs. The Brezhnev telegram was a signal that the Soviet Union has substantial assets inside Iran that it will not easily give up.

The Soviet newspaper *Trud* reported on the same day as Brezhnev's telegram that the U.S. CIA was responsible for the bombing campaign against Iran's mullahs. The assassination of Rajai and Bahonar, said *Trud*, occurred "where it would be hard to stage the bombing without the necessary equipment and preparation," and noted that the people who carried off the bombing were CIA-connected agents of the Shah's old secret police who went underground with the Khomeini revolt and "now emerged with arms when their bosses across the ocean ordered it."

The Soviet news agency TASS, however, reported sharp criticisms of the Khomeini regime for its economic policy, demanding that the regime take action to "raise the standard of living." Because such criticisms of Khomeini's regime are rare in the Soviet press, it is clear that the Soviets—like the Americans—are preparing for the succession fight in Iran.

More overt pressure was placed on Iran by Moscow through Afghanistan. Repeated Soviet broadcasts and propaganda about Iran have sharply warned the Iranians not to interfere in Afghanistan by supporting the rebels there.

The Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies have at the same time intensified a pattern of closer economic cooperation with Khomeini's Iran. Many of Iran's factories and economic installations have now been taken over by economic advisers from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, North Korea, and other communist states. Ahmed Azizi, one of the leading Iranian economic officials, noted this trend when he said in August that Iran "finds it easier to deal with the Soviet bloc" in trade and economic cooperation.

Inside Iranian society, especially in the north, the

Soviet KGB has established a host of secret agents, according to Iranian sources. The Moscow-controlled Tudeh communist party, in particular, controls important sections of the Iranian media, especially the radio-television company, and has considerable influence in Iran's crucial oil fields. This range of Soviet influence, combined with the pressure that Moscow is able to exert on neighboring states, gives the Soviets effective veto power over the course of developments in Iran.

The myth of 'strategic consensus'

What is the case for Iran is also the case for the entire Middle East. Because of the preponderance of Soviet power in the arc of crisis, most of the region's states are unwilling to link up with Alexander Haig's pro-NATO alliance.

In a recent interview in the *New York Times*, Haig outlined his policy: "What I'm saying is that the environment has changed. When I went to the Middle East in April-May, you will recall my talking about a strategic consensus. Whether that's the right terminology for the phenomenon is less important than the fact that there is such a consensus.

"I wasn't talking about creating one," said Haig. "I kept hitting that as we went around. I was talking about the fact that one was emerging historically, and it was a product of post-Camp David events.

"What am I speaking of? I'm speaking of the collapse of the Shah of Iran, of the Iran-Iraq conflict, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the dynamics of the Horn of Africa and the two Yemens."

The reality of Haig's situation is far different from the secretary's implication that Washington is on the verge of consolidating its strategic alliance, which one analyst recently called a "flight of fancy" on Haig's part. In fact, the events cited by Haig have caused Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other countries to be more, rather than less cautious about ratifying the Haig "consensus."

In Iran, the entire spectrum of political forces has virtually broken with the Khomeini regime. But the State Department continues to issue public support for the mullahs. Behind the scenes, the United States and the British are reportedly scrambling for some means to maintain Khomeini as the "only" alternative to the Soviet Union's seizing control of Iran, while at the same time looking for some replacement coalition.

The sharpest statement of Reagan's sudden open support for Khomeini came in the *New York Post* on Sept. 1. Citing State Department sources, the *Post* reported that "there is a growing feeling among government analysts, academics, and even some ex-hostages that the survival and stability of Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution may be in the U.S. national interest." It added, "Experts agree that the current Iranian regime—which is viewed as staunchly anti-Soviet—is the only

one that can achieve stability, because of Khomeini's presence."

Future scenarios

In this context, let us consider the future of Iran as viewed by Anglo-American intelligence.

From 1979, London and Washington were committed to support the rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iran. By the summer of 1981, however, it had become apparent that the experiment had failed, that the mullahs could not withstand a concerted campaign of pressure by the U.S.S.R., and that the darlings of the Carter administration and the British SIS—like ex-President Bani-Sadr and Admiral Ahmed Madani—had been ousted by the fanatical, power-hungry tyrants from the Islamic Republican Party mafia.

Since June 1981, therefore, the British and the Americans have sponsored a systematic campaign of bombings inside Iran directed against the leadership of the IRP. These bombings have been carried out by experienced officers of the old Savak and Iran's former Imperial Guard, in coordination with exiled Iranian officers in Europe and elsewhere. According to some sources, Gen. Hossein Fardoust, the ex-deputy Director of Savak who betrayed the Shah to aid the Khomeini revolution, was involved in recent bombings.

The first question to be answered is: will the British allow Khomeini himself to survive, or will they opt for "Khomeinism without Khomeini"?

William Beeman of Brown University has recently indicated that Khomeini might be worth more dead than alive. "His death could elevate the very notion of inevitable struggle between religious and secular forces in Iran into a permanent feature of Iranian politics, perpetuating itself for years to come," Beeman wrote. Khomeini's death, he added, would lead to an "endless civil war" that would "poison the future for generations."

Khomeini himself may not relish the idea of becoming a dead symbol. After the bombing of Rajai's office, Khomeini met with a delegation of so-called moderate mullahs, who reportedly suggested that, in order to stay alive, Khomeini ease the campaign of repression and restrain the constant executions by the "Islamic courts." From Paris, ex-President Bani-Sadr offered an olive branch to Khomeini; he said that several times opposition groups had asked Bani-Sadr if they should kill Khomeini, and he had advised them not to do so. And Ayatollah Shareatmadari has been telling Khomeini to try to make a deal with Iran's armed forces.

On Sept. 9, however, Khomeini delivered a speech that indicates that he has rejected the offer of the "moderates" and Bani-Sadr: "If persuasion and standards do not work, then it will be the sword. They will be hit on the head with iron bars or the sword until they

are reformed. . . . Increase the number of mullahs." It is now generally considered that Khomeini has realized that he cannot survive in the context of the new regime, and has decided to go down with the ship of state. In fact, when Khomeini had initially hesitated after the bombing of Rajai and Bahonar, other radical ayatollahs, such as Ayatollah Montazeri and the holy city of Qom mafia, openly broke with Khomeini—for the first time since the 1979 revolution—and attacked him for being too soft. They demanded an all-out crackdown.

According to Iranian sources, the U.S., British, and French intelligence services plan to bring back Bani-Sadr and the terrorist Islamic "Mujaheddin-e-Khalq" organization to govern Iran later this fall, after toppling Khomeini's regime. The desire to support Bani-Sadr and Co. reflects the unwillingness of the State Department and the British SIS to learn from their mistakes.

By restoring "President Bani-Sadr," a murderer who sent thousands to their deaths in 1979-80, the Anglo-Americans believe that they can retain something of the Islamic character of the current regime and thus continue to rally Iran's mullahs around an "Islamic Republic" with a more strongly military nature.

In Europe, Gen. Bahram Aryana and Adm. Kamal Habibollahi, who carried out the useless terrorist seizure of the Iranian gunboat in the Atlantic last month, are reportedly being lined up to support Bani-Sadr and the Mujaheddin in a new Iranian regime. A number of other political Iranian exile forces, such as the duo of Admiral Madani and ex-Prime Minister Ali Amini, are willing to join this coalition.

The position of the monarchist forces is a bit different. A meeting of the top leadership of the pro-Shah forces was recently held in Switzerland, ending in an agreement to link 17 organizations in a coalition to overthrow the Khomeini regime. But there are signs that even the monarchists may be prepared to seek a deal with Bani-Sadr, although both sides will try to cut each other's throats in the process. According to some rumors, Ardeshir Zahedi, Iran's ex-ambassador to Washington and a pro-Shah loyalist, was dispatched to meet Bani-Sadr and Mujaheddin leader Massoud Rajavi in Paris after the Swiss summit.

The monarchists believe that the following simple logic holds: the West needs to stabilize Iran and prevent Soviet gains, Bani-Sadr cannot hope to stabilize Iran without the armed forces, the armed forces are generally loyal to the Shah, and—therefore—the Shah and the monarchist movement are needed by the West.

Such logic might initially sound reasonable. But some believe that it holds almost guaranteed potential for a double-cross against the monarchists, once they help Bani-Sadr to regain power. And still the question remains: who will challenge Moscow if the Soviets decide to veto the operation?

Current options for Iran's exile groups

by Thierry Lalevée

The ongoing collapse of the regime of the mullahs in Iran, as well as the takeover in early August of an Iranian gunboat by a promonarchist, anti-Khomeini commando, has again brought to light the role of the numerous Iranian exile organizations. Mostly based in Paris, these organizations have been struggling for the past three years to end the Khomeini nightmare. According to *Le Figaro* on Sept. 7, the Iranian resistance is rapidly organizing to undertake some spectacular actions over the next two months.

Le Figaro's reporter Desjardins described in that article his two-week-long journey from Istanbul to the inside of Iran, a journey made possible by the complicity of the Turkish authorities and the guidance of the Iranian

Admiral Habibollahi's odd self-justifications

The following are excerpts from an Aug. 27 article published by the Iran Press Service based on an interview with Adm. Kamal Habibollahi.

On the Tabarzin affair: " 'But I want to emphasize that at no stage did we ever consider blowing up the vessel. I know the Iranian navy needs it very badly, especially since many of its other gunboats are inoperative because of the lack of maintenance. We are all Iranians and, though we know the war with Iraq is not of our making, we wanted to see the ship was handed back to them after we had proved our point.' "

On EIR: "Habibollahi suggested that it was corrupt personnel he had purged from the Imperial Army when he became commander that were behind the allegations that he had kept links with the Khomeini regime after he had fled from Iran five months after