

cadets, promising U.S. aid "including the use of armed force if necessary — to help Saudi Arabia resist an external military threat. . . . We can provide the best training and equipment in the world," and "we will do so. . . . The Middle East faces the possibility of aggression from outside the region, probably supported by the Soviet Union. . . ." Brown warns the Saudis against making even peaceful overtures to the Soviets, saying that "in Afghanistan, a government already friendly to the Soviets was overturned by an even more avidly pro-Moscow regime. . . . Just following a pro-Soviet line is no protection against a Soviet-backed coup."

Sunday, Feb. 11: in the United States, Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wa) says on CBS's "Face The Nation" that the sole purpose of Brown's trip to the Mideast is to "lay the foundation for a mutual defense pact between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel which would be backed 100 percent by American financial aid and arms." He delivers a "threat" to the Saudis that it would be "very easy" for an "armed force of only 250 men" to "disrupt the Saudi oil fields." "Anyone who knows the area knows that."

Monday, Feb. 12: in Washington, D.C., President Carter, in response to a question at his press conference, refuses to repudiate the Chinese statements about the Soviet Union. Carter also endorses the new Iranian government of Ayatollah Khomeini and then predicts a worsening economic situation in the U.S. due to the "oil crisis."

Monday, Feb. 12: in Washington, D.C., Hodding Carter III gives a State Department briefing echoing Harold Brown's statement of Feb. 9: "The Soviet Union has lost China. The Kremlin is now debating exactly who lost China."

Monday, Feb. 12: from Amman, Jordan, Harold Brown demands the establishment of a "Persian Gulf Joint Command," the expansion of the U.S. strategic nuclear base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and the creation of an American airborne strike force for the Persian Gulf region.

Monday, Feb. 12: from the Soviet Union, in a broadcast on Iran, Radio Moscow states that "there are reports that the U.S. 82nd Special Task Force Paratroop Division is on full alert, although this has been denied by the Pentagon. . . . U.S. troops in Europe are also said to be on alert."

Monday, Feb. 12: in Kuwait, Britain's Queen Elizabeth arrives on the first leg of a three-week trip to six states on the Arabian Peninsula. This is the first trip to the region by a British sovereign. "Like Harold Brown during his current visit to the region," says New York Times Mideast correspondent R.W. Apple, Jr., "the British Secretary (David Owen, who is accompanying the Queen) is expected to urge the Arab countries to maintain their decidedly pro-Western attitudes and not to conclude from the Iranian experience that the U.S. and Britain are unreliable friends in times of crisis. He will also emphasize the finer points of British weapons. . . ."

Brown gives Saudis the royal treatment

In strategically coordinated trips, Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Queen Elizabeth II descended on the Middle East last week to consolidate a regional anti-Soviet, NATO-style military pact. To blackmail moderate Arab nations into this scheme, both Brown and the Queen are further provoking the crisis in Iran. They warn of "Soviet-backed" Muslim "revolutions" spreading throughout the region.

Their target is Saudi Arabia. While in Riyadh, Brown tried to pressure the Saudis into dropping their opposition to Camp David and to instead throw their weight behind a regional defense pact, known by insiders as METO, the Middle East Treaty Organization. The core of METO would be Israel, and, should the Camp David accords be realized, Egypt as well.

The Saudis expressed little interest in getting involved in such a scheme. Brown's glowing reports of his "friendly" talks with Saudi officials notwithstanding, Brown's mission was a flop, reported Radio Moscow. Brown said the Saudis

China threatens war against Vietnam

Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping's warning that China would "punish" Vietnam are proving to be more than just tough words. A massive Chinese buildup of troops and materiel along their border with Vietnam has begun with reports of new armed incursions on a battalion scale by Chinese troops into Vietnam. According to reports from the region, on Feb. 8 a Chinese unit occupied a strategic hill inside the Vietnamese border and fortified it, prompting a quick Vietnamese demand that China withdraw "all its occupationist troops."

The Vietnamese charged that the Chinese incursion was a "serious, dangerous, and premeditated step by the Chinese authorities in their criminal hostility toward Vietnam which, if continued, undeniably proves the correctness and urgency" of a strong Vietnamese appeal to the United Nations (see below).

The tense situation in Indochina represents a grave threat to world peace, with the prospect of a Chinese attack on Vietnam leading to Soviet action in support of their Vietnamese allies with whom they have a treaty. The Baltimore Sun this past week quoted an anonymous military analyst in Hong Kong saying "a misstep now could mean the start of World War III." The Vietnamese, in a statement in the Vietnamese Communist Party daily Nhan Dan (excerpted below) and in their message to the United Nations, warned

had agreed to act as a surrogate U.S. force in the region and be part of the Israel-Egypt camp. But, as the Soviet daily *Izvestia* made a point of quoting, Saudi Defense Minister Sultan has called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.

An article in the Feb. 7 *Jordan Times* attacked "geopolitical tacticians" like Brown who are trying to foment crisis in the Middle East in order to rope the Saudis into an anti-Soviet axis. The Saudis will not buy this, the article charged, and cited as evidence the growing cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. On Feb. 5, the two countries concluded a mutual security pact allowing for extensive cooperation in meeting one another's internal security needs. Such an arrangement has the potential for expanding into region-wide cooperation.

Within days of Brown's arrival in the Middle East, Queen Elizabeth landed in Kuwait on the first stop of a six-state tour of the Middle East. According to the British Foreign Office, the Queen, like Brown, "is to try to settle the nerves of the Arab rulers, who have been badly disturbed by the earthquake just across the gulf" in Iran.

The Israelis are up to their own brand of dirty tricks to push the Arabs in line. Last week, Israel's Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan made what is being reported as a major concession to the Arabs, indicating that Israel was ready to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization — a sly

move to try to get the Saudis to back a Camp David bilateral settlement in exchange for some cosmetic arrangement for the thorny Palestinian question.

At the same time, Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman took the occasion of Harold Brown's visit to Israel to announce that Israel is willing to cut its defense expenditures by 25 percent over the next 10 years if a peace accord with Egypt is signed.

Both statements are being floated for the edification of those factions in Saudi Arabia around Prince Abdullah, the head of the British and Mossad-linked National Guard, who are trying to gain leverage against the anti-Camp David faction around Crown Prince Fahd.

Israel is the centerpiece of METO, Weizman is making clear. He told Brown that Israel is "an island of peace, stability, and democracy in a world wracked by demoralization." New York Times military correspondent Drew Middleton, citing numerous U.S. military sources, wrote on Feb. 13 that Israel is the only stable country in the Middle East that the U.S. can depend on.

—Nancy Parsons

of the threat "to world peace" posed by the Chinese military provocations.

The Chinese troops (10 divisions) have been placed on the border with a backup of heavy artillery, tank units, and logistics. Several airfields have been rapidly constructed in the Chinese province of Kwangsi bordering Vietnam. Western analysts report a third of the Chinese airforce, including units deployed across from Taiwan, has been deployed into the region. Chinese overflights of Vietnamese border areas are reported. It is also reported that a new Chinese commander for the region, General Yang Teh-chih, a veteran of the Korean War, has been appointed.

The question is whether the Chinese are willing to take the huge risk involved in an attack on Vietnam, not only militarily, but politically. So far, Southeast Asian reaction has been muted, stopping at calls for stability and adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward the situation in Cambodia. The Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak visited Washington last week looking for American security guarantees and military hardware. Whatever guarantees they did get were obviously not enough as the Thai government announced on Kriangsak's return that he would be off to Moscow on March 14.

The view of the Vietnamese, according to one diplomat, is that "two humiliated powers" — are seeking "revenge." In this view the Chinese have been frustrated in their attempt to bring Southeast Asia as a whole into a position of informal subordination. Observers see that situation as the prime objective of Kissinger's Vietnam policy once it became clear that the U.S. could no longer maintain a

strong military presence of its own in the region. This view is reinforced by information from high level sources that, from 1975 on, the Chinese made numerous offers to supply Vietnam if only they would cut all ties with the Soviet Union. Teng himself is reported to have first made this "offer" in a 1965 visit to Hanoi shortly after the large-scale U.S. entry into the war.

The failure of the Chinese to defend their client regime in Cambodia is the key event that set the stage for the present danger of large-scale war. The complete collapse of the barbaric Pol Pot regime in the face of the rebel Cambodian forces of the National United Front for National Salvation, backed by the Vietnamese, was far more rapid than anyone, including Peking, anticipated. While Chinese radio, calling itself "Voice of Democratic Kampuchea" yet broadcasting from southern China on Radio Peking's frequency, is claiming continued resistance from Pol Pot forces, the situation seems to be rapidly calming down.

The Chinese have been humiliated indeed and the well-known intense Chinese chauvinist hatred of Vietnam is evident. The Chinese know something that extremely well-informed intelligence sources have informed this reporter of — when the Pol Pot regime collapsed some 10,100 Chinese prisoners were taken by the victorious forces. The victors seized, in addition, a huge quantity of materiel including 10,000 guns, 400 anti-aircraft guns, 190 tanks, 40 intact fighter aircraft (20 were destroyed by the Chinese before capture), 50 ships, and huge quantities of ammunition.

— Daniel Snider