

force initiative: "We're consulting other nations about what ought to be done to keep the Straits of Hormuz open." This escalation, despite no apparent danger to the straits, is joined by Carter's official admission of U.S.-Iranian arms negotiations, albeit "indirectly." "We've consulted through other means with Iran . . . but that particular point [release of hostages in exchange for military spare parts] would perhaps be better for me not to single out among the others."

Sept. 26: Administration suspends the sale of six remaining General Electric ship turbine engines to the Iraqi navy. Muskie declares that the crisis inherently carries with it the danger of nuclear war: "The Middle East is such an unstable area, so potentially explosive, that when hostilities erupt, it could escalate to the point where the ultimate unthinkable hostilities could take place."

Sept. 27: The White House announces that it is still willing to convene a meeting of America's major allies to "discuss ways of keeping oil moving . . . if ship traffic is threatened." The statement followed European and Japanese flat rejections of the international naval task force proposal. It also followed direct Carter administration admissions that even with a worst case indefinite interruption of Iran and Iraq's oil supplies there was no danger of any oil shortages in the world's consuming nations.

Sept. 28: Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is quoted claiming that "events over the past 48 hours show that Iran is the only effective bulwark against the Soviet Union in the Middle East."

Sept. 29: The administration leaks that Deputy Secretary of Defense William Graham Claytor, Jr. had ordered the services to submit proposals for improving the Rapid Deployment Forces before the war, so as to bring the forces to readiness.

Sept. 30: Pentagon announces that Carter has ordered the dispatch of four AWACS radar aircraft to Saudi Arabia. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Komer is in Egypt for talks with Egypt's leaders, discussing RDF "forward-basing"—out of Egypt—contingency plans.

Oct. 1: Komer leaves Egypt for Israel. Pentagon announces that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Jones, will arrive later in the week in Cairo for more talks with Egyptians. The talks are to center on "the use of Egypt as a forward-basing area into any Arab nation that requests it."

CARTER CAMPAIGN

The strategy and the new setbacks

by Kathleen Murphy

With less than a month before the U.S. presidential elections, apprehension continues that Jimmy Carter might resort to a provoked foreign policy crisis.

"We expect Carter to try to pull off some kind of foreign policy grandstanding within the next two weeks," one Washington source says. "He wasn't able to get the hostages out of Iran, so he may try some kind of military intervention, especially if the Iran-Iraq conflict drags on."

Enhancing this possibility is the fact that Carter, despite one of the dirtiest campaigns on record, has managed to fall behind Ronald Reagan, with no prospect of reversing the trend through normal means.

The latest *New York Times*-CBS poll, taken shortly after the League of Women Voters-sponsored debate Sept. 21, shows Reagan moving from four points behind Carter to a five-point lead. The *Times*-CBS poll also revealed that Reagan is winning the competition for independent voters who have deserted John Anderson, contrary to earlier expectations that Anderson's decline would benefit Mr. Carter.

Carter is encountering unprecedented hostility from traditional Democratic Party constituencies as well. Many Jewish voters bitterly oppose Carter for what they perceive to be his anti-Israel stand. The two leaders of the newly formed national Democrats for Reagan, former Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski and Hershey Gold, are both prominent figures on the Zionist political circuit. Carter would be badly hurt in key states like New York and Florida if enough Jewish voters decided to simply sit out the election.

Carter's weakest flank is the economy. Despite administration claims that an economic recovery is just around the corner, few blue-collar workers, supermarket shoppers, businessmen, or farmers have been persuaded by Carter's predictions of an upturn. Unable to deal with the underlying causes of the country's economic disasters, Carter instead is turning to politically selective "quick fix" transfusions of federal funds.

Carter's newly released steel recovery program is a case in point. Release of the program was clearly targeted

at gaining Carter votes in some of the key swing states he needs to win, particularly Pennsylvania and Ohio. Pennsylvania, which went for Carter by a slight margin in 1976, is now in Reagan's column, according to a Gallup poll commissioned by the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and released Sept. 29. Although both Reagan and Carter campaign staffers say the program could boost his standing in Pennsylvania and other steel-oriented states, they also concur that it could be a very temporary phenomenon.

In an effort to recapture the urban vote, Carter is pouring taxpayers' dollars into cities strategically situated with respect to the election. Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Miami have all received large doses of federal funds over the last few months. During the last week of September, the administration promised more than \$50 million to Detroit.

This month, the Carter administration will announce its quarterly awards of urban development grants to economically distressed cities. The announcement, totaling \$150 million, is coming a month earlier than usual. About \$200 million in federal aid for local mass transit programs is expected to be released to local governments soon. According to one bus manufacturer, the Transportation Department has been holding up the announcement so that it will come nearer the election.

Carter is attempting to woo the farm belt, by paying out \$300 million in cash over the next month to compensate farmers hurt by this year's drought. In addition, much of the \$2.6 billion in promised drought-relief loans will be committed before Nov. 4, Agriculture Department officials say.

And the Department of Energy will soon award an additional \$300 million in development money for synthetic-fuels projects. So far, the administration has doled out synfuels money to 46 states.

Despite this outright attempt at vote-buying, Carter is still in deep trouble. The results of the *Times*-CBS poll are being confirmed by surveys commissioned by regional organizations. Republican pollster Richard Wirthlin, acknowledged to be one of the most accurate pollsters, believes that Reagan is now positioned to capture enough swing states to win the election. Wirthlin says that Reagan has a solid lock on Wisconsin, Illinois, and New Jersey, with a strong edge over Carter in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Texas. New York and Florida are "up for grabs," as one Carter campaign aide put it; how they go will depend in large part on the Jewish vote. And while Floridians' anger at Carter for the recent influx of Cuban refugees has been partly assuaged by the convenient timing of Fidel Castro's decision to halt the flow, Democratic Senator Henry Jackson was nevertheless loudly booed when he mentioned Carter's name at a Miami rally for Florida Sen. Richard Stone last week.

DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

Texas Liberals retain control

by Anita Gallagher

A sparsely attended two-day Texas state Democratic Party Convention concluded in Houston Sept. 27 and elected Robert Slagle, a lawyer and the choice of the Carter White House, chairman of the Texas Democratic Party. After the election, the remaining delegates passed a resolution to repeal the state law against sodomy proposed by the Gay Rights Alliance, in a sharp repudiation of the Democratic Party Convention's 2 to 1 vote against repeal in June.

Political observers in Austin agreed that the results demonstrate that the liberals in the Democratic Party are at present firmly in control and have again turned back for the time being a challenge from the conservative wing of the party.

"This is going to weaken the Democratic Party, no question about it," said *Houston Post* reporter Juan Palomo. "This is going to mean a two-party system for Texas a lot sooner than most people thought." Texas has been overwhelmingly Democratic for the past hundred years.

The battle between the victorious Slagle and 38-year-old State Rep. Luther Jones was to some extent a surrogate war exercise between current Democratic National Committee Chairman John C. White, a Slagle backer, and John Hill, the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor in 1978, who supported Luther Jones at the convention. Both Hill and John White are expected to seek the Democratic nomination for governor in 1982, when Republican Governor Bill Clements's term expires.

Slagle was clearly perceived as the candidate of White and Carter White House. Bob Strauss personally spoke at the convention on Saturday and attempted to rouse support for Carter's campaign.

Rep. Luther Jones's support was based on forces identified with the Open Convention, such as Billie Carr, a leading Texas supporter of Ted Kennedy's candidacy. On Saturday, Slagle got 64 percent of the vote, while Jones received 33 percent.

A third candidate for the chairmanship was David Samuelson, former commissioner of Travis County (Austin), who was credited with 2 percent of the vote.