

A Hobson's choice for Mideast policy?

by Mark Burdman

As *EIR* goes to press this week, the critical question of what policy the Reagan administration will adopt toward the Middle East has by no means been definitively resolved. A number of options are known to be available for discussion, but whether they are in fact discussed depends on what stance the administration takes toward a package of advice presented to it during the closing days of February by visiting British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Through her public speeches and policy briefings, Britain's Iron Lady presented the view that the United States is now confronted with two alternative policy routes in the Middle East. Either, the Reagan team pursues the "next stages" of the Carter administration's Camp David treaty, including that treaty's secret protocols involving the extension of NATO into the Middle East, the U.S.-supported Egyptian takeover of Libya, and the "division of labor" between Israel's Mossad intelligence service and the the Muslim Brotherhood to run destabilizations along the so-called arc of crisis extending from Israel's eastern neighbors through the Indian subcontinent. Or, as the "alternative," the administration focuses all its attention on deploying an American or multinational "rapid deployment force" as the lead feature of a military buildup and confrontation with the Soviet Union in the Persian Gulf.

Thatcher's policy map for the Middle East is the context in which Secretary of State Alexander Haig has recently been insisting that he plans to relegate the Arab-Israeli dispute to a secondary position during his planned April 3-8 trip to the Middle East, in favor of a primary concentration on the "East-West global struggle." Haig

has been the central point-man inside the administration for Mrs. Thatcher's Camp David-or-Gulf confrontation "Hobson's choice," neither of which has yet received official White House blessing.

But if the White House stays mum about Haig's deference to Thatcher, United States policy in the Middle East will soon fall into a shambles.

The Camp David/Gulf militarization policy framework is foredoomed.

On the Camp David side, no Arab leader outside Egypt's Anwar Sadat takes the treaty with any seriousness at all. Jordan's King Hussein, the Arab League's official liaison with the Reagan team, has repeatedly denounced the Camp David arrangement, most recently referring to it as a "dead horse." Speaking for a consensus of the Arab leaders (minus Sadat), Hussein has proclaimed Camp David a crude attempt to polarize the Middle East and to make it into an arena for a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation.

For the same reason, Thatcher's speeches on the Middle East in New York and Washington caused an enormous storm in the Middle East. In these speeches, Thatcher insisted that a "new departure" for Anglo-American policy-making would have to depend on three interrelated features: 1) the creation of a "rapid deployment force" that would include participation of British units immediately and French units at a later date; 2) endorsement of a report just issued by the New York Council on Foreign Relations and London Royal Institute of International Affairs and their counterparts in West Germany and France, calling for a French-British-American-German-Japanese "directorate" to oversee a

military confrontation with the Soviets in the Gulf; and 3) the juridical extension of NATO into the Middle East.

Over the Feb. 28-March 1 weekend, Thatcher's proposals drew fire from Arab press. A newspaper of the United Arab Emirates accused Britain of wanting to "revive its abominable occupation of the Gulf." A newspaper in Qatar proclaimed that the Gulf states "totally reject any guardianship" from the outside. *Al-Nadwa*, a Saudi Arabian newspaper, accused Thatcher of flaunting Britain's desire for "domination, escalation of tension, and establishing zones of influence" in the Gulf.

The outburst so shook up the London newspapers that the *Times* and the *London Daily Telegraph* have since run editorials and commentaries strongly questioning the viability of Thatcher's schemes. These editorials may reflect a factional tendency in London, represented by Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, that fears that Thatcher is not only playing with an empty hand but also may provoke an oil cutoff in the Persian Gulf by precipitating a showdown with the region's countries.

Mobil, Philby, and a new Gulf crisis

In the days immediately following Thatcher's departure from the United States, *EIR* uncovered a nest of operatives centered in the Cultural Affairs and Political Intelligence divisions of Mobil Oil in New York that is committed to inducing the Reagan administration into such a dangerous showdown with the Gulf countries. This Mobil group has influence within Haig's State Department and Richard Allen's National Security Council through its funding of the Thatcher-linked-Washington Heritage Foundation and Georgetown University. It also has direct long-standing connections into the British-run, Kim Philby Comintern wing of Soviet intelligence, which has maintained oversight for the deployment of countless radical Arab grouplets in the postwar period.

With its right-wing Tory and left-wing Philbyite connections, the Mobil-centered group has the capability to pull off a new crisis in the Gulf. Its two foci for this are overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and running a "cold coup" inside Saudi Arabia against the pro-American faction around Crown Prince Fahd, the two most committed leaders in the Gulf to high levels of oil production at moderate prices and to oil-for-technology arrangements with Western Europe.

According to Washington sources, Mobil Oil intelligence operatives have recently held long strategy meetings at the Heritage Foundation. Out of these meetings, one source reported, has come the directive for Haig to focus his April Middle East travels on "an ultimatum to the Saudis: join with NATO in the fight against global Soviet aggression, or face the loss of American protection." This ultimatum will "produce a U.S.-Saudi confrontation, and tip the hand inside Saudi

Arabia in favor of that conservationist crowd that wants low production at the highest possible price."

To heighten pressure on Haig, the Mobil-Heritage-Georgetown grouping has dispatched British Persian Gulf specialist J. B. Kelly for "many a long meeting with Richard Allen over at the NSC," the source revealed. Kelly is the author of *Arabia, the Gulf, and the West*, a 1980 book calling for an Anglo-American "recolonization" of the Gulf.

At the same time, the Mobil crew is playing the other side of the fence in Baghdad. Several Mobil agents have recently been dispatched to Iraq, under cover of "American overtures" to President Saddam Hussein and making contacts with Iraq's oil officials. In reality, Mobil's agents have been establishing contacts with—and control over—the motley array of Iraqi opposition groups who are preparing for a coup sometime this spring if the Iraqi army fails in its plans for a spring offensive against Iran.

Mobil's case officer in Baghdad is reportedly Joseph Malone, a former CIA station chief in Lebanon and Central Treaty Organization coordinator for the eastern Mediterranean who is an intimate of Mobil Cultural Affairs coordinator Jack Hayes. Investigators had earlier pinpointed Malone as one of the orchestrators of the series of 1975 events leading up to the assassination of Saudi Arabian King Faisal, through his connections into the British-run MK-Ultra drug crowd that had brainwashed the Saudi prince who assassinated Faisal.

Malone has also had ties for almost three decades into the KGB circle around British triple agent Philby. Informed observers regard it as no accident that shortly after Malone's assuming his post in Baghdad, Iraqi Communist chief Aziz Muhammad surfaced at the Soviet Party Congress to issue a blistering attack against Saddam Hussein and demand his overthrow. Muhammad's comments were inserted into the March 1 *Pravda* by the Philby-KGB crew, despite the fact that Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev is known to want to maintain close Soviet ties with the Iraqi Hussein.

If the Mobil crowd succeeds in its destabilization of the Gulf, oil prices will go sky-high, with devastating effects on the world economy. Several Mobil directors, notably London-based Arab financier Suleiman Olayan and former U.S. ambassador to Germany and Turkey George McGhee, support the global austerity and population-reduction objectives outlined in the State Department *Global 2000* environmentalist report, and regard very high oil prices as a means for reaching these objectives.

To get out of the box created by this Mobil bunch working along Thatcher's lines, President Reagan would have to shelve the fundamental premise of the British in Middle East policy: that crises there can only be managed, not solved.