

Alexander Haig sabotages Washington's Mideast policy

by Robert Dreyfuss, Middle East Editor

Interviews with U.S. diplomatic and intelligence personnel and senior Middle East diplomats have revealed a East policy on the part of the Reagan administration in support of American interests in the area.

"Your President simply is not acting forcefully, not presidential," said a top Arab diplomat candidly. "It is presidential," said a top Arab diplomat candidly. "It is hard to us to believe, but we do not even know whom to talk to. The White House is not leading the policy, it is just allowing others to pull and push in several different directions."

A former U.S. ambassador with extensive Middle East experience said bluntly, "We are heading for a disaster. The idiots at the State Department simply don't know what they are doing. If Iran is allowed to make further gains, what will happen is this: the Iraqis will realign themselves with the Soviet Union and Syria, there will be a leftist takeover in Iran soon thereafter, and the Arab Gulf states will have to accommodate themselves to the Soviet Union, which will become the strongest regional power."

He added, "And this is exactly what the Israelis want to happen. They believe that this will force the United States to support them and them alone. I would say that Haig agrees with this policy."

And from a diplomat from one of the states of the Arab Gulf: "U.S. credibility is on the line. Iran's military victories are seen throughout the Gulf as a humiliation of the United States. We remember how the mullahs treated the Carter administration during the hostage affair. The result is that the United States is not seen as a reliable ally. In the Gulf, there is extreme concern over Iran's threats—but as a result there will not be, as some people think, any Arab Gulf rush to ally with the Western states and NATO. Precisely the reverse will occur."

The cause of this situation is that former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the self-admitted agent of the British Empire, has been allowed to coordinate a clique which intends to politically collapse Egypt and Iraq, and to cause a dramatic shift in Saudi Arabia and the Persian

Gulf to the advantage of Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Led by Secretary of State Alexander Haig, this "Kissinger mafia" has steered the Reagan government into a policy track essentially identical with that of the discredited Carter administration.

Kissinger, through Haig and other allies in and outside of the administration, is orchestrating U.S. support for the Iranian mullah regime in its war with Iraq. Furthermore, ignoring both American and Israeli distaste for Israeli Defense Minister Sharon, Haig's State Department and the Kissinger mafia are backing the revival of the U.S.-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation, thus committing the United States to a military alliance with Israel.

Among the policies carried over from the Carter era by the Kissinger circle are: support for Iran's brand of "Islamic fundamentalism" as a bulwark of U.S. influence against Soviet expansion, a favored outlook of Zbigniew Brzezinski; reliance on the inept and useless Rapid Deployment Force as a semi-colonial military arm; and continued agreement with the Israeli interpretation of the terms of the Camp David accords, to the exclusion of a dialogue with the Palestinians.

Kissinger's Geneva boys

The looming catastrophe in the Middle East has been building since the era of President Ford, when a small clique of aides to Henry Kissinger assumed an almost total dictatorship over U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Under three presidents—Ford, Carter, and now Reagan—this Kissinger crew has steered American policy in a pro-British direction.

Included in the Kissinger mafia are the so-called Geneva boys, the Kissinger aides who attended the 1973 Middle East conference in Geneva with the Secretary of State. In

Years of Upheaval, there is a photograph of most of the group at the opening of the Geneva talks.

Among the Kissinger underlings who deserve men-

tion, besides Haig himself, are Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger; U.S. special envoy on Lebanon Philip Habib, Kissinger's former number-two man; U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Alfred Atherton; and a host of Middle East specialists now in key unofficial positions, like Harold Saunders of the American Enterprise Institute; Joseph Sisco, the Trilateral Commission's Middle East specialist; Bill Quandt of the Brookings Institution; and so forth (see article, page 32).

In the Pentagon and the National Security Council, others—such as Eugene Rostow, Richard Perle, and Geoffrey Kemp—are part of the network of the Kissinger “old boys.”

Despite controversies within the administration, Haig is reported to be in control of Middle East policy. In fact, in the near future Haig intends to replace Assistant Secretary of State Nick Veliotis—who is reportedly at his wits end over American policy and has threatened to resign—with U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis, says *Newsweek* magazine. The reason, they report, is that Haig feels more comfortable with Lewis and seeks his own team in the Near East Bureau.

The policy orientation of the clique is to subordinate American Middle East policy to the goals of London's Foreign Office. Basically, that means that the United States' influence in the Middle East must be eradicated, in order to clear the way for expanded Anglo-Soviet influence in the region. London, which seeks to reorganize NATO for greater involvement in the underdeveloped sector, is prepared to offer to Moscow a deal in the Middle East: in exchange for toleration by the U.S.S.R. of NATO intervention in crucial Third World countries, where British banks have outstanding debt obligations, the British will facilitate greater Soviet influence in the area of Southwest Asia.

The British-Soviet cooperation in toppling Iran's Shah and supporting the mullahs is a case in point.

Another case in point: Israel Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who makes Menachem Begin look like a moderate, is consciously taking advantage of U.S. weakness in preparation for expanding Israel's role as a regional “superpower.” Despite reports of scattered opposition to Sharon in Washington from the Pentagon and U.S. military, Secretary of State Haig is intent on ramming through a revival of the agreement on strategic cooperation. Sharon, who arrived in the United States on May 20, expects to be able to force a rewrite of the Memorandum to the advantage of Israel (see Middle East Report, page 45).

The Memorandum of Understanding, which was suspended by Reagan last December after Israel's illegal annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights, is a drastic “anti-Soviet” document, which portrays the American-Israeli military relations as the primary means to deter Soviet influence in the region. In addition, the Memo

provides hundreds of millions of dollars in military benefits to the Israeli arms industry and pledges to foster greater Israeli arms exports to the NATO countries, Latin American states, and Africa.

The Memo locks Washington into a narrow alliance with Israel, virtually handing the Arab states to the Soviet Union and to whatever British-sponsored “moderate anti-American” movement should develop! That, in fact, is Sharon's motivation.

U.S. backing for Iran

Even more outrageous than the self-defeating U.S. support for Sharon is Haig's continued backing for the Iranian regime.

Since late March, Iran has managed to drive back Iraqi forces toward the Iranian-Iraqi border, though at enormous casualties for Iran's “forces.” Iraq, which went to war in September 1980 after unprovoked Iranian attacks, sought to defend itself and the Gulf states from the spread of the Khomeini plague. But, within a few months, Iraq found itself without allies internationally and bogged down in an unwinnable war.

Iran, in the meantime, picked up substantial support from Israel, Great Britain, and the United States, along with Syria, Libya, and North Korea—and quiet Soviet backing. Now, Iran is readying its forces for an attack against the Iraqi-occupied city of Khorramshahr, where thousands of Iraqi troops have dug in for a determined defense. Two Iraqi divisions are deployed north of Khorramshahr for the defense of the city, and elements of nine Iraqi divisions are stationed just across the border in Iraq east of Basra, the southern port city of Iraq.

Iraqi strategy seems to be to pull back from an unwinnable situation to the border amid hope that Iran agrees to negotiations on a ceasefire and settlement talks. However, Iran seems determined to first push Iraq out of Khorramshahr, which has been described as a Stalingrad-type battle in preparation. At present, Iraq is restricted to a single supply route linking Basra to Khorramshahr for resupplying its forces.

Yet Iranian leaders have proclaimed their goal repeatedly in the past weeks of spreading the Iranian revolution to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the Gulf, and most military analysts expect Iran to try to cross the Iraqi border in an effort to destroy the Iraqi regime. That goal, while perhaps not one Iran can achieve easily or at all, is a challenge of the first magnitude to the most basic U.S. interests in Gulf stability.

Despite this situation—described by one Arab diplomat as an “emergency”—Haig not only continues to tolerate Israeli support for Iran, but supports the delivery of American weapons to Iran's forces.