

Anglo-Soviet moves in Iran

by our special correspondent

Every effort is being made by the British Foreign Office to tilt the Persian Gulf crisis to favor the Soviet Union. Despite some moves on the part of the United States to rebuild an alternative policy orientation in that region bypassing normal State Department capabilities, the British and their Soviet partners are proceeding ahead with the consolidation of their political arrangement. The key target country is Iran, where the new initiative by the British and the Soviets has also included the French.

Between March 10 and 15, the head of the British Foreign Office's Mideast section flew to Teheran to re-establish full diplomatic relations with Iran. The upgrading of the British Embassy in Teheran is accompanied by a British offer of 250,000 pounds sterling financial compensation. Iran had demanded 500,000 pounds. In preparing the way for a complete rapprochement with the Khomeini government, the British increased their trade in the last three months of 1984 by 67% over the 1983 period. The total amount of trade is upwards of 730 million pounds. British trade with Iraq and Saudi Arabia declined by nearly 50% during the same period of time.

This trade will also include arms sales to the Islamic fundamentalists bypassing the U.S. embargo against trading with an avowed enemy of the United States. The strategic purpose of the British move is to offset the U.S. input into Iraq, where the Iraqis have started to transform their Air Force into a U.S.-style operation.

The British and the Soviets are looking to maintain the Iran-Iraq war as a means for keeping up Islamic fundamentalist pressure, i.e., terrorist actions, against the United States. In this balance-of-power arrangement, the British geopolitical gameplan is to isolate Iraq and build up their relations with Iran, while encouraging the Khomeiniacs to improve relations with Moscow and Paris.

During the week of April 5, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko met with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic and International Affairs, Hussein Kazempour Ardebili, accompanied by two other foreign ministry officials. For Gromyko to personally meet a lower ranking minister is extremely significant. The meeting lasted two hours, with Gromyko suggesting that high level political delegations be exchanged between Moscow and Teheran. It was further decided that an economic subcommittee at the ministerial level be formed for expanding trade.

Simultaneously, the outgoing chargé d'affaires of the

French Embassy in Teheran, Jean Perrien, met with the speaker of the Parliament and member of the Islamic Commission Hashemi Rafsanjani. According to transcripts made available to *EIR*, Perrien not only offered the French government's apologies for "misevaluation of the Islamic Revolution," but added emphatically that France wants to "improve relations." Here are some excerpts:

Perrien: "It is a great honor for me that his excellency Mr. Rafsanjani received me. I was interested in seeing your excellency a long time ago, but I did not have anything to say. But now that situation has changed. I think since the appointment of Mr. Dumas as the French foreign minister, a new atmosphere was created between Iran and France and we are once again talking to each other. . . . He asked me to convey his message to Iranian leaders that he is interested to create a balance and to improve relations. . . . France by no means wants to have any conflict with Iran. . . . On the other question, there is the uses of the opponents [of the Islamic Republic] which have taken refuge in France. France is trying to limit their activity."

"The foreign policy direction, especially, is not drawn by the Socialist Party and in some instances it can be said that the Socialist Party acts as an opposition against the Elysée. In general it is President Mitterrand who completely controls the policy. . . and Mr. Dumas has Mr. Mitterrand's total confidence."

Rafsanjani: "I think the policy of the French government towards Iran in the past cannot be justified by any means. . . . If we did not have in mind to review our policy in the future because of the help given for the short stay of the Imam before the revolution, and if we did not have an inclination to improve relations. . . . Because the bad things which your government did against the Islamic Revolution was worse than [what] the Americans did to us. At present our ships in the Persian Gulf are being hit by your missiles. Our money has been kept in your banks. Our terrorist enemies have assassinated the best of our people and are now under the protection of your police. . . . Among the European governments, the French government has chosen the worst policy toward us, while it could have been cautious and be like Germany and Britain and other Western countries."

The next phase

The ever-weakening policy grip that patriot forces in the United States have maintained will be the ongoing target of Soviet-backed terrorist operations utilizing Syrian and Iranian Islami Jihad capabilities. The bombing outside Madrid near the U.S. Air Force base at Torrejón was the work of the Islami Jihad. Intelligence sources indicate that this unit may have been directly under KGB operational orders as opposed to some arm's-length operation. The Spanish action is being viewed by U.S. intelligence as part of a recent pattern of KGB/spetsnaz operations that includes the Greek bombing at a U.S. military facility and more recently, two similar incidents in Naples.