

Camp David's partners balk at the new 'Carter Doctrine'

by Mark Burdman

On the eve of President Carter's announcement of a new Middle East "Carter Doctrine" during his Jan. 23 State of the Union address, the countries that are supposed to form the core of the President's envisioned Cold War alliance are sending unmistakable signals that they do not want to join Washington's precipitous rush toward thermonuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union.

These doubts—expressed to varying degrees by leading forces in Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—have forced the Carter administration to try to reshape the original Egypt-Israel Camp David treaty along the lines of policy recommendations made in October 1979 by the NATO thinktank Atlantic Council and more recently by British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington during a several-nation tour of the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent.

The gist of these recommendations is that Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other "conservative" Arab states will overcome their reservations about confronting Moscow in a regional multilateral pact if they are offered in return a deal over the controversial Palestinian issue. To clinch this deal, Washington is retooling Egypt's policy to make it appear to be more militantly "pro-Palestinian" and to make Egypt the gendarme power of the Arab world. At the same time, "suggestions" are being made in such journals as the London *Economist* that a change in government in Israel favoring the ascendancy of Defense Minister Ezer Weizman and opposition Labour party leader Shimon Peres is in the interest of the Anglo-American alliance.

As has become standard with Carter's policy designs, this new twist, justified by the administration on the basis of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan, is boomeranging, for at least three easily identifiable reasons:

1. The more pressure exerted on Israel to subordinate itself to the fundamentalist forces of an "Islamic



Pact” in the Middle East, the more internal forces in Israel express a “realist,” anti-Cold War point of view.

2. The more Egypt is retooled along seemingly nationalist, pan-Arab lines, the more social forces are tending toward an expression of national self-interest. This could become “Nasserist” in direction at some point in time, and end the isolation of Egypt from the other Arab countries which had been a long sought-after goal of Henry Kissinger and his British mentors.

3. The more Carter talks of “stopping the Soviets” in a region so geographically near the U.S.S.R., the more the Soviet military and political leadership will themselves play tough, building up and activating long-dormant “assets,” dramatically stepping up their aid to friendly countries and putting increased pressure on the countries targeted by the Anglo-Americans for their regional alliance. Given the Soviets’ superior conventional resources in the region, this will add up to a decisive strategic defeat for the U.S. in the Middle East—unless Carter goes mad and decides to hold the line against Soviet advances by launching thermonuclear war.

In short, Carter is on the verge of another foreign policy debacle. Given his past performance profile, this doesn’t mean he won’t proceed along the losing path anyway.

Israeli neutrality in World War III?

Probably the most remarkable reaction to Carter’s latest policy turn has come from commentators in Israel, both in the ruling Likud Party and in the opposition Labour Party.

In a Jan. 11 Op-Ed in the English-language *Jerusalem Post*, Moshe Sharon, a former adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin on Arab affairs, strongly attacked the overwillingness of Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman to make Israel a potential target for Soviet nuclear attack by granting the United States bases on its soil. In a piece entitled “Protecting Israel’s Sovereignty,” Sharon stated:

Defense Minister Ezer Weizman said it in his usual straightforward way: the Americans do not even need to ask permission to use Israeli military facilities....

The United States may need and may ask to establish a military presence in this country, and the government of Israel should study such a request—when it is made—very very carefully, and if possible *refuse* it....

[In the Middle East-Persian Gulf region] a tense situation might lead to a world war. And in such a war, Israel should maintain its neutrality, or at least

conserve every bit of its national and military energy to protect its sovereignty and security.

Israel cannot, and should not, get involved directly in a superpower conflict by having foreign military bases on its soil. Israel is too small to survive Soviet ballistic missiles on its major cities.

For those Israelis who have lately been unhappy because it looks as if they will be denied the honour of having an American base on their soil, it should be made clear that they have cause for rejoicing if the news is true....

If the Americans ask for a base, or any other form of military presence in Israel, it cannot be automatically bestowed on them either by Weizman or by Begin....

Sharon’s views were complemented by a commentary in the newspaper *Davar*, mouthpiece of the Histadrut labor confederation, which argued that a Cold War works to Israel’s *disadvantage*, despite the impression being conveyed by Begin and others that the opposite is the case. Editorialist Dov Eppel laid out his arguments in a Jan. 10 piece entitled, “With a View to the Day After Tomorrow As Well”:

... [T]he more the Israeli prime minister, his ministers and Knesset members speak about Israel’s importance as the only stable democratic fortress in the Middle East, the greater is Israel’s isolation and the greater the West’s reservations over its political moves....

The West feels that Israeli politicians do not understand or do not want to understand that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf states and the other Arab countries, be they progressive or nonprogressive, pro-Soviet or anti-Soviet, have immeasurably greater weight than Israel. ... This being the case, the United States is more inclined toward fanning its anti-Soviet feelings in the Muslim world and especially in the Arab world....

From a psychological standpoint one can understand the eagerness of Israeli politicians and activists to entertain illusions to the effect that the Khomeinist revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan will spur the Egyptians to agreeing that Israel be given a place in the strategic anti-Soviet formation under the aegis of the United States. ... However, psychological explanations cannot change the political and strategic reality of our region....

Therefore, all Israel’s declarations about a willingness to help the United States in providing bases or services for its forces sound like bravado and like an idle attempt to inflate our self-importance out of all proportion. Moreover, it is not clear why

it is Israel that has to play voluntarily the role of the fool rushing in where angels fear to tread....

There are no foundations to the contention that Israel and the Jewish people will benefit from a lengthy deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations. This is an optical illusion evolving from desire. The truth of the matter is that in times of crisis it is the weight of the huge Islamic bloc countries which rises and Israel's weight which decreases....

... Israeli politicians, in their ill considered declarations, [are lending] support to those forces in the Soviet establishment who maintain that Zionism is, in essence, the enemy of the Soviet Union. ... One should always think not only about tomorrow but about the day after as well, that is to say, about the future that is beyond the horizon and avoid oratorical anti-Soviet exercises which add absolutely nothing to Israel's strength and weight on the international plane.

There is no guarantee that there will be a normalization in Israeli-Soviet relations but it is clear that from the point of view of Israel's long-term interests and the real interests of the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union the efforts to provide Israel with the image of an essentially anti-Soviet country are a serious error.

Beyond such commentaries, the Israelis are taking concrete moves to distance themselves from the latest policy turns of Carter's National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, including calling upon "Jewish sportsmen" to participate in the Moscow Olympics and issuing statement from embassies in Europe advising the West to "go slow" on pressures against Moscow. These actions led the *Daily Telegraph* of London to go so far as to accuse Israel of "indirectly helping the Russians" in an editorial statement Jan. 22.

To reverse this situation, Anglo-American policy-makers are looking for some kind of "ace-in-the-hole" inside Israel who can rise to the occasion to make the desired geopolitical deal. Candidates include not only Weizman and Peres but also former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, who is, according to France's *Le Figaro* of Jan. 19, "looking for all available signs to find the route to return to power" and who is staking out a "realist" position on the necessity of Israeli concessions on the occupied West Bank. But Dayan, a pragmatist, historically has been reticent about Israel directly confronting the Soviet Union and may now be staking out a "maverick" position in Israel to find a different kind of solution for Israel's dilemma than London's Cold Warriors have in mind.

Prince Fahd: Willing to supply the Soviets

On Jan. 10, Riyadh Saudi News Agency published an account of an interview given by Saudi Crown Prince Fahd to four foreign journalists. The account, officially sanctioned by the Saudi government, published what French, American, and British journals omitted to mention: the Saudis' active consideration of supply contracts with the Soviet Union.

His Highness Prince Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz expressed extreme displeasure with the media campaign which the kingdom is being subjected to by certain American and European media controlled by the Zionists. He said: We will not accept that our friendship with the Americans is one-sided. We are not obliged to befriend them. The doors open before us are many and legitimate in all fields. ...

At the beginning of his statement his highness expressed regret over the process of a campaign which certain American and European media have launched

against the kingdom despite the fact that Western civilization from A to Z chiefly relies on the kingdom, and that disruption of oil to it will turn its civilization into a cold piece of iron.

His highness pointed out that the policy of silence which the kingdom has hitherto pursued in the field of information must change. He added that neither the American press nor the American people have their interests served by such an unjust campaign, especially at this time, when states such as the Saudi Kingdom openly maintain their friendship with the United States. He described this friendship as being based not merely on sentiments but also on interests, and that there is not a single American state which does not benefit from this friendship.

Prince Fahd continued: We do not ask anyone to support us if we are in the wrong. On the contrary, the support we seek is for right and justice. *There are many states such as the Soviet Union which are only too ready to supply the kingdom with everything it wants. In other words, we could easily replace the Americans.*" [In Western news reports received by *EIR*, the sentence rendered in italic was distorted to omit mention of the Soviet Union—ed.]

Shifts in Egypt

Israel is not the only one hedging its bets. In a Jan. 18 piece entitled "Egyptian Concern Grows Over Reliance on U.S.," the *Financial Times* of London reported:

The sharp increase in U.S. military involvement in Egypt is causing consternation among some senior officials, diplomats and serving officers in Cairo.

They particularly fear the longer-term political effects of an even higher U.S. profile in Egypt and the possible lack of consultation with Washington over American intervention in either Iran or the Gulf. ... [This could] make Egypt alone almost totally dependent militarily on the U.S.

Cairo's own Middle East News Agency reported a shake-up in the Egyptian military command, centering on the important paratrooper and "special forces" divisions. Kuwaiti and other Arab press sources have claimed that the reason for these shakeups was growing disenchantment with President Sadat's veering off into an adventurous "confront-the-Soviets" posture.

The disenchantment in the armed forces has mapped onto unrest in the domestic political scene. Both traditionally "rightist" and "leftist" protest groups are becoming more vocal in attacking Sadat. This phenomenon has filtered up to the usually docile Egyptian parliament, where opposition leader Ahmed Shukry of the Socialist Liberal Party charged Sadat with "hearkening back to the days of one-man rule" in his manner of making decisions; Shukry demanded a parliamentary debate on the question of the granting of base rights to the United States by Egypt.

Not long after this development, the U.S. State Department revealed that it was at least temporarily shelving the idea of acquiring base facilities in Egypt.

Undoubtedly, the unrest in Egypt is coming from layers who could be labeled "British assets." Shukry, the Egyptian "left" and the Egyptian "right" are all carefully nurtured by longstanding British networks run through the British Labour party, the British Fabian Society, and so on. This suggests that a twofold process is now going on inside Egypt.

On the one hand, Egypt is being "reprogrammed" to be able to assume the mantle of "leader of the Arab-Islamic world" in the mooted "Islamic Pact" configuration. Thus, we see the Egyptians suddenly taking a markedly tougher position in the Egypt-Israel West Bank autonomy negotiations. Egyptian Foreign Minister Butros Ghali—an intimate of the British International Institute of Strategic Studies through his former directorship of the Al Ahram Center for Strategic and International Studies—has lately demanded in very strong language that no progress in the process of Egypt-Israel normalization will occur without a formal "linkage" to

the issue of "Palestinian self-determination." For this position, Ghali has been branded an "obstructive influence" by Israeli Prime Minister Begin. Israeli negotiator Yosef Burg, Israel's Interior Minister, has reacted to Ghali's statements by talking of a "crisis" in the negotiations that can only be resolved by a new Camp David summit.

For this type of policy reprogramming, it is useful to have a managed level of dissent inside Egypt. It is noteworthy that as soon as Egypt stiffened its demands, the United States agreed to up its military aid level to Egypt by \$1.1 billion, including the shipment of sophisticated F-16 fighter-jets.

On the other hand, this process could get out of control. The combination of Egypt's need *not* to be isolated from the Arab world, plus the Egyptians' fear of taking on the Soviets in alliance with an administration like the one currently in power in Washington, could propel a "nationalist" reaction inside Egypt which would demand that Egypt remain neutral, or become pro-European, in its orientation in future regional conflict situations.

The Jordan option

To abort the latter possibility and to build up Egypt's image as leader of the anticommunist Islamic world, the Carter administration is now devoting its efforts to working out a backroom deal between Israel's Weizman, Muslim Brotherhood-connected layers within the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Jordan, to give Jordan the West Bank in some kind of joint arrangement with Israel, in return for which Jordan would be cultivated as a keystone nation of the emerging Carter Doctrine alliances.

This policy direction was enunciated by Carter administration Middle East Special Negotiator Sol Linowitz in a Jan. 17 speech before the Foreign Policy Association. In his address, Linowitz declared that the next focus of his negotiating efforts would be Jordan's King Hussein. On the same day, the *Baltimore Sun* reported that during his next swing through the Middle East, Linowitz would stop over in London for sessions with the Jordanian ruler.

On Jan. 19, the London *Economist* ran an article from Israel claiming that "Jordan has recently executed an about-turn in its attitude toward the West Bank" and "is engaged in a drive to regain control of the territory." The article laid out what is claimed were details of this policy shift.

Red Scare over Riyadh

To leverage the Jordanian situation in the desired direction, special efforts are also being exerted toward

the influential leadership of Saudi Arabia. Following the stopover of Lord Carrington in the Saudi Kingdom, an extensive propaganda campaign has been mounted by Anglo-American sources to portray Saudi Arabia as imminently threatened by Soviet aggression and as therefore needing the protection of a multilateral regional military pact.

On Jan. 21 from Beirut, Lebanon, Associated Press ran a wire dispatch claiming that the Saudi government had sent an urgent message to Washington reporting on an airlift of "hundreds of Cuban troops and dozens of Soviet generals" to "Marxist" South Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula. According to AP's cited "sources," the Saudi government considered the alleged Soviet reinforcement "as grave a threat as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan," since the Soviet Union is "consolidating its grip on South Yemen as part of a plan to encircle the Persian Gulf oil resources." In response to this, an "alarmed" Saudi Arabia "might soon put its 44,500-strong military force on alert," AP asserted.

AP gave an insight into the real source of this scare, noting that Saudi leaders had given "the gist" of the Soviet build-up story to Lord Carrington when he was touring the Gulf.

Twenty-four hours before the AP dispatch, two of Britain's leading Sunday dailies had printed articles on this theme. The Tory *Sunday Telegraph's* lead story, written from the British fiefdom of Oman, was entitled "Arms Build-up in S. Yemen: Gulf Faces New Pincer Move by Russians." The article claimed that "disturbing new details" had reached Oman of "the total political and military subjugation which the Soviet Union is imposing on its Arab satellite. ... Taken together, as they must be, with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, ... they suggest that the Kremlin is methodically setting the stage for a two-way pincer movement to close in on the Persian Gulf."

Taking matters a step further, the London *Observer's* Middle East veteran Patrick Seale claimed that "high-level Saudi envoys" have recently held "secret Washington meetings" with Zbigniew Brzezinski to press for a "new American initiative on Palestine," in return for which the Saudis can "come out boldly on the American side in the present confrontation with the Soviet Union over Afghanistan."

Without such an action, Seale reported, the "neutralist current" inside Saudi Arabia will grow and the Saudis will begin selling oil to the Soviets.

This concern on Seale's part reflects the reality of what Saudi Arabia is prepared to do under the condition that Washington does not clean up its act. Recently, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd, in an interview with the foreign press, proclaimed his intent not only to realign his foreign policy closer to France and West Germany,

but, according to the version of the interview released by the Riyadh Saudi News Agency, expressed his willingness to open supply contracts with the Soviet Union.

Soviets firm up ties with Syria

What *really* concerns the Saudis now is what has always concerned them: that a Cold War in the Middle East could lead to a polarization of the Arab countries between the NATO and Warsaw Pact camps, thereby wrecking Arab unity and threatening the stability of the kingdom both internally and externally. This was the motivation behind Saudi opposition to the original Camp David treaty, and is still a driving force behind their policy.

British propaganda aside, the Soviets are *in fact* strengthening their relations with their allies in the Middle East, in reaction to the push for a Carter Doctrine. The more this push goes on, the more the Soviets can be expected to expand this process and the more likely a superpower confrontation will become.

Last week, Soviet Central Committee Secretary Boris Ponomarev, the man responsible for relations with foreign Communist parties, made a trip to Jordan where he held meetings with the Communist parties of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, and firmed up relations with the ruling Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party in Syria. Simultaneously, a Ponomarev deputy visited Damascus.

Immediately after the Soviet visits, the Syrians convened a meeting in Damascus of the anti-Camp David "Steadfastness Front" which was attended by the foreign ministers of Algeria, Libya, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization. At the meeting, Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam delivered a strong attack against the whole notion of trying to build an anti-Communist alliance in the Islamic world. Khaddam blasted "those who try and pretend to the world that they are defending Islam and the Moslems and who are at the same time giving help to Zionist racists. ... The Arabs and Moslems know very well who their friends are and who their enemies are. The Arab nation cannot ignore those who try to crush it and compare these with the friendly Soviet Union who gives us support in our struggle."

Syria was not the only nation in attendance which placed itself under the protection of the Soviet Union against Zbigniew Brzezinski's Muslim fundamentalist plot. The government of Algeria, a nation recently besieged by Muslim Brotherhood unrest, issued a statement Jan. 20 denouncing a soon-to-be-convened "Islamic conference" in Islamabad, Pakistan, as part of an "American conspiracy" to divert the attention of the Islamic world toward a holy war against the Soviet Union.