

moderation of Iraqi policy has enabled Baghdad to assume a leading military role for the Arab world. The PFLP and the PDFLP are two of the most extreme groupings within the Palestinian movement, which are against any peace settlement with Israel. On the other hand, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the moderate PLO leadership allied to Yasser Arafat have adopted a policy of working with continental Europe to forge a firm diplomatic front to break the Camp David agreements, seeking an international consensus for an overall settlement of the Mideast crisis inclusive of the recognition of Palestinian rights. The PFLP and the PDFLP represent a security threat to the Arab nations of the Gulf not only by virtue of their hardline ideology but their alliance with the Islamic regime of Iran—which has pledged to export revolution to the Arabian peninsula—and their allegiance to the regime of Libya's Muammar Qaddafi.

Following Iraq's break with the PFLP and the PDFLP, Qaddafi lambasted Iraq for divorcing itself from the confrontationist policies of the so-called "rejection front." Qaddafi also attacked the Baghdad regime for its "hostile stand towards the Islamic Revolution in Iran."

Both Iranian and British propaganda have attempted to portray Iraq's new turn as a matter of the Hussein government becoming a pawn of Washington at the expense of relations with Moscow. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Na'im Haddad during a visit to Kuwait last week told the press that "relations with the United States are hostile and relations with the Soviet Union are friendly, but at the same time, critical." The next day Saddam Hussein denounced the provocative U.S. military maneuvers off the coast of Cuba.

Iraq has been the most outspoken critic of the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini, condemning it as a stooge of the U.S. in its efforts to take over the oil resources of the Arab nations. Baghdad's Persian language broadcast last month again reiterated the links between Teheran and Washington, and noted that the problem of the American hostages is just a smokescreen: "The hostage problem is a smokescreen intentionally started by these two governments" to cover their covert relations. Radio Baghdad reports on a meeting between the Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait, Ardakani, and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young. The report noted that "the amassing of U.S. troops at the mouth of the Gulf poses a direct threat to the Arab countries of the region, and not to Iran."

The British dailies, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* in recent days have caustically attacked the developing alliance which the French are cultivating with the states of the Gulf and has condemned Iraq for making a bid to become the central power of the region. What these attacks leave unstated is that Baghdad maintains a friendship treaty with Moscow which is seen in London and Washington as a serious obstacle to their Islamic defense pact.

Iran

President Bani-Sadr versus the Mullahs

by Nancy Coker

A behind-the-scenes power struggle is raging in Iran.

At the center of this struggle, whose outcome will determine not only the fate of the hostages but the very shape of the Middle East, is Iranian President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr. Known as a moderate because of his gestures over the past several months to defuse the hostage crisis, Bani-Sadr is operating as an appendage of the Anglo-American faction associated with British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. This faction is at odds with the confrontationist policies of National Security Council chief Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose eagerness to resort to military intervention in Iran is viewed correctly as a plunge into head-on collision with the Soviet Union.

Over the past several weeks, numerous editorials in the *Times of London* and other British outlets have endorsed Bani-Sadr and his up-to-now futile attempts to form a government. In throwing its weight behind Bani-Sadr and the moderates, the Vance-Carrington crew is pursuing a larger strategic objective that actually runs parallel to the Brzezinski track but stops just short of going to the brink of war. That objective is the forging of a new military alliance comprised of Iran, the Arab oil states, and the nations of the Persian Gulf, working in coordination with the West, all in the name of "preventing Soviet domination of the Gulf's oil supplies."

The problem facing the Vance-Carrington faction is that Bani-Sadr has no political base inside Iran. Moreover, with the fanatic clergy of the extremist Islamic Republican Party now in ascendance as a result of that party's victory in last week's parliamentary run-off, Bani-Sadr is incapable of creating a political base, and has little if any room for maneuvering. Insiders report that should he move at this time to release the U.S. hostages, who have become the rallying point of the entire nation the country will collapse.

On May 5, the *Village Voice* leaked that according to associates of Bani-Sadr, the U.S. raid on Iran in April was aimed at bringing about a coup d'etat against Bani-Sadr by "leading clergy and government officials" including such extremists as Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Ayatollah Beheshti of the Islamic Republican Party, Defense Minister Mustafa Chamran, and

former Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi. According to the *Voice*, these four have backgrounds as activists in the Muslim Student Association in the United States, "a body now viewed with interest and mistrust in Teheran since it received funding from the American Friends of the Middle East, identified in the 1960s with the CIA." "The planned release of the hostages," the *Voice* notes, "was part of a process designed to overthrow Bani-Sadr."

That the U.S. raid on Iran was aimed at toppling Bani-Sadr and bringing into power the lunatic faction around Ghotbzadeh on the one hand, and around the clergy on the other, is clear. From the start it was Ghotbzadeh, not Bani-Sadr, who was in on the preparations of the U.S. raid, meeting secretly in Paris to work out the details of the operation with First Secretary Murphy of the U.S. embassy there. It is interesting to note that it was while the raid and coup preparations were in the works that Bani-Sadr first began to sound the alarm publicly of the danger of his being toppled.

Despite the failure of the raid, and with it the failure of the coup, the operation achieved a partial "success" in that on the eve of the parliamentary elections, the hard-line faction associated with extremist Ayatollahs Behesh-ti and Khalkhali was strengthened considerably, undermining Bani-Sadr's efforts to shore himself up. Earlier, Bani-Sadr had been granted by Khomeini the power to appoint a prime minister and to oversee the armed forces and Iranian radio/TV. But with the upsurge of fundamentalist fanaticism following the raid, Bani-Sadr has been blocked by the Islamic Republican Party in his efforts to appoint Admiral Ahmed Madani, a moderate, as prime minister. The post still remains unfilled.

The fight between the Bani-Sadr moderates and the Khomeinians peaked with last week's confrontation between Bani-Sadr and Ayatollah Khalkhali, known in Iran as the "Blood Judge" for his having sent thousands of people associated with the Shah's regime to their death. Khalkhali, defying an order from Bani-Sadr to the contrary, told his followers to tear down the mausoleum of the founder of modern Iran, the Shah's father. In the boldest move since his accession to the presidency, Bani-Sadr stripped Khalkhali of all his titles, a move that is certain to ignite an intensified round of internecine warfare inside the country.

The precariousness of the situation inside Iran was underscored by a well-briefed Iranian source who revealed that "the reason the hostages were taken in the first place was because the Khomeini regime was crumbling," and that the hostages will continue to be held because if they are released, the Khomeini "revolution" will unravel. Last week, Habibollah Peyman, the head of the terrorists occupying the U.S. embassy in Teheran who is known to be tied into Israeli intelligence, stated that the hostages would be held "indefinitely, in order to ensure the continuation of the revolutionary process."

Asia

Soviets warn Ohira on 'China card'

by Richard Katz

Using the sternest tones heard in years, Soviet Ambassador to Japan Dimitry Polyanski warned Japan not to proceed with its planned de facto military alliance with China and the United States and its corollary military buildup. Polyanski reminded the Tokyo Foreign Press Club of the U.S.S.R.'s new naval presence in the Pacific—including deployments of nuclear submarines armed with nuclear missiles into the South China Sea—and its new military bases on the famous "four northern islands" claimed by Japan. A few days earlier, TASS had condemned Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira's full support for "Carter's adventurism" in Iran as well as Japan's headlong move into a triangular military alliance with China and the United States.

The reasons listed by Polyanski for the Soviet military deployments reflect how seriously the Soviet Union regards the current strategic situation in Asia. Polyanski insisted his government would not tolerate Japan joining a U.S.-China military alliance, which would have a deleterious effect on the already growing instability in the Korean peninsula and the growing tensions in Indochina. The Soviet Union perceives a cooperative effort by the United States and China not only to undermine Soviet friends in Asia, such as Vietnam and India, but even to destabilize relatively peaceful situations such as Korea—all for the sake of producing a pan-Asia military coalition against the U.S.S.R. Polyanski's speech was aimed at preventing a full consolidation of recent Japanese moves to join the U.S.-China alliance.

Chinese threat

China's menacing posture in South Asia lies at the core of the new Soviet military deployment. Only days before Polyanski's warning, Pakistani dictator Zia ul Haq visited China and received full backing for his recent series of military skirmishes with India in the disputed Kashmir region. China itself has built up its troop strength in Sinkiang Province bordering on Kashmir (and the Soviet Union), according to the London *Daily Telegraph*. A European source reports that China is also adding more troops on its own border with India.

At the same time, China is attempting to destabilize Indira Gandhi's government by funding and inciting the