

Middle East Report by Mary Lalevée

Iranian 'arc of crisis' again

Will Great Britain manipulate the United States into a superpower showdown in the Gulf?

A crisis is being orchestrated by the British and the Soviets over Iran, over which the two traditionally have exerted joint control. Anti-Soviet measures taken by the Iranian fundamentalist regime could well lead to a staged provocation against the Soviets, such as the seizing of their embassy in Tehran. Such an incident would be followed by a massive Soviet response—most probably the invasion of the northern part of Iran. This, in turn, would lead to a superpower confrontation, the United States lining up to defend the Khomeini butchers.

Soviet leader Yuri Andropov stressed in his recent interview with the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* that the Soviets regard areas along their perimeter (i.e. Iran, with which they share a long border) as important to their security.

During the Second World War, Soviet forces invaded Iran and created a "Republic of Azerbaijan," uniting a northern region of Iran with the Soviet region of Azerbaijan. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1946, a treaty gave the Soviets the right to move back into northern Iran at any time they find their security threatened.

Reports during early May have spoken of large-scale Soviet preparations for such a move. Soviet Politburo member Aliyev has twice in the past few months called for the re-creation of a "United Azerbaijan."

At the same time, an anti-Soviet campaign has been orchestrated in Iran. First 18 diplomats were expelled from the Soviet embassy, then another

37 summarily set back to Moscow. The Iranian Communist Party, the Tudeh, has been banned, and its leaders, members and supporters arrested. Sources report that more than 5,000 people have been imprisoned during the past few days in a holy war against supporters of the banned party.

Some observers in the West have hailed these moves, viewing them as part of an overall "confrontation with the Soviets," following similar expulsions of Soviet diplomats from France and Britain. High-level Iranian exile sources in Europe warn, however, that "It is the British who have orchestrated this whole affair to trick President Reagan, to make him believe that . . . the Americans can count on Islamic fundamentalism as their ally against the Soviets."

EIR founder Lyndon LaRouche has said that a world crisis may soon be triggered in Iran if fundamentalist fanatics step up their moves against the Soviets, and if "Islamic students" seize the Soviet embassy. In that case, he said, the Soviet Union would give an ultimatum, and then move in.

In a statement to *EIR*, indicating that the British are expecting precisely such a move, a senior British official remarked that "If there were any kind of hostage-taking, the Soviets would react extremely strongly. It would be comparable to the U.S. embassy being taken in Mexico City." Iranian exile sources and strategists in Europe concur that the situation in Iran is "potentially far more explosive" than the Syrian-Israeli situation, as a British

think tanker commented.

The sudden moves by the faction currently running Iran, an extreme fundamentalist group known as the Hojatai, are said to have been prompted by London. Soviet defector Kuzichkin, who fled to London from his post in Iran, had a full list of Tudeh Party and KGB infiltrators into the leadership of the Iranian regime.

Iranian Foreign Minister Veloti and the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, made a secret trip to London in February, where they were handed the list.

The Tudeh Party has long been an asset of British intelligence; indeed, it has gained the nickname "Petro-Tudeh," because its funding has come primarily from the British oil companies in Iran.

The Hojatai group of ayatollahs is reported to want to end the war with Iraq in order to be able to move the Iranian army onto the border with Afghanistan, where Soviet forces have recently made incursions into Iranian territory in "hot pursuit" of Afghan rebel forces. At the beginning of May, the Iranian regime for the first time officially announced its support for the Afghan mujaheddin rebels. The Hojaitai group is led by land-owning mullah oligarchs from the region bordering Afghanistan.

There are reports that some U.S. firms have taken the "anti-communist" bait. Several have started moving back into Iran, even reportedly scaling down operations in Saudi Arabia to build up their Iran operations. An Iranian exile source in the United States commented that the recent multibillion-dollar deal between Iran and Turkey was a "window" for Western nations to resume large-scale trading in Iran—all in the name of stopping the communists from taking over the country.