

containment” policy identified with economic sanctions which prevent collaboration.

‘Dual containment’ is vintage Kissinger

The “dual containment” policy has been presented as a “Clinton administration policy,” because, it is said that, while previous administrations sought to deal with Iran and Iraq, by promoting a balance of power, supporting one against the other, now the idea is to counter them both. In point of fact, both versions of the policy are vintage Kissinger. In reality, it was Kissingerian policy, as shared by think-tankers Bernard Lewis and others in the 1970s, to stop the demographic, economic, and industrial development of any economy in the developing sector, as spelled out in Kissinger’s 1974 strategy paper, NSSM 200. The doctrine was applied through fomenting civil wars (Lebanon), through political assassinations and destabilizations (Pakistan, India, Egypt), across the subcontinent of India into the Middle East. It was the logic of Kissinger’s Malthusian doctrine that was the driving force behind Kissinger’s support for the Iran-Iraq war, which bled both countries of human beings and resources for eight years. Kissinger’s viewpoint was, “Let them kill each other off.” As Iraq was struggling to emerge from that war to rebuild, the same geopolitical circles who were later to make Kissinger into Sir Henry, launched the second Gulf war, to “bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age,” as James Baker III put it. No sooner had the second Gulf war been ended, than leading Kissingerians, such as hired pen Kenneth Timmerman, began to put out the line that “Iran had become the regional superpower,” and “the next threat in the region would come from Teheran.” This, because Iran had maintained neutrality in the war, and was on its way to reconstructing after the 1980-88 disaster. Now, eight years after the end of the conflict with Iraq, as Iran has rebuilt its basic infrastructure, and is pursuing the regional development policy elaborated by Foreign Minister Velayati, the Kissingerians are determined that Iran must be stopped. In essence, Iran has been orienting toward Central Asia and the Caucasus, in a manner similar to Iraq’s approach toward the Arab world prior to Desert Storm.

If one considers the enormous potential, which is not only economic but political, of the new configurations emerging on the map of the Gulf region, Central Asia, and Asia, such a “dual containment” policy can only be characterized as “shooting oneself in both feet at the same time.” Contrary to the geopolitical ravings of Kissinger, and his co-thinkers, such as Martin Indyk, a person identified with the “dual containment” posture, it is in the immediate self-interest of the United States, to promote the economic well-being and industrialization of both Iran and Iraq. Any serious commitment to peace in the area, must be premised on the fact that economic development, requires vast regional infrastructure projects, bringing neighboring states into collaboration. Iraq, even despite the ravages of Desert Storm and the continuing, murderous embargo, still represents a national economy with ad-

vanced infrastructure. Iran, which has been expanding its infrastructure, now has a population of 65 million; growing at a rate of 18 million per year, Iran will have over 100 million people as the 21st century opens.

The question is: Why does the United States continue to adhere to a policy which is a relic of the Kissingerian past of George Bush et al.? Why does “public opinion” accept the torrent of lies pouring out of the British press about the “twin evils” of the Gulf? Why is the United States thus excluding itself—and millions of jobs for Americans—from the exciting economic promise in this area of the world?

When asked in an interview for his reaction to British media reports, that his embassy in Germany served as a headquarters for terrorism, Ambassador Mousavian replied, “I have been ambassador for six years. No German authority has ever spoken to me about this crazy, groundless suspicion. The interest is clear: The English want to destroy relations between Bonn and Teheran.”

Interview: Seyed Hossein Mousavian

Iran’s strategic economic role grows

Seyed Hossein Mousavian is the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Bonn, Germany. He was interviewed by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach in early August.

EIR: Your Excellency, on May 13 of this year, the Mashhad-Sarakhs railway was inaugurated, establishing the missing link along the new Silk Road. Your deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pacific, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, who presented the achievement at an international symposium in Beijing, said that it was the result of cooperation with Turkmenistan, “without any international assistance.” Can you explain how the project was done, how it was financed?

Mousavian: In the Name of Allah. The railway is almost 300 kilometers. One hundred seventy kilometers is on Iranian soil and 130 km in Turkmenistan. Each country has constructed its own railway, and at the border of the two countries, they have been connected to each other. The investment for this project was provided by both, Iran for its territory and Turkmenistan for its territory. No foreign investment was involved.

EIR: The Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan stretch is but one part of a vast rail network which Iran is expanding. Can you tell us more about these transportation grids and related infrastruc-

ture projects?

Mousavian: Changes in the international political situation, particularly the independence of 15 states of the former Soviet Union, raised this idea that Iran could make use of its geostrategic importance as a bridge between East and West. So, we decided to expand our railway networks.

In fact, the geographic position of Iran, since ancient times, has made it possible to construct the easiest, shortest, and cheapest network in the region. With the idea of economic cooperation with the countries in Central Asia, the Islamic Republic of Iran has expanded its railway as well as road and sea networks. To allow access of Central Asia to overseas, and vis-à-vis the railway between Bafgh and Bandar Abbas (in the south), the construction of different airports and the recent connection of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railways were undertaken. There is no doubt that these networks will help the national interests of the countries in the region.

EIR: In addition to rail development, Iran has also undertaken a series of oil swaps with neighboring countries, whereby, for example, oil from Kazakhstan would be transported to Iran, and a corresponding quantity of Iranian oil would be sold to consumer markets. Meanwhile, several pipeline projects are in discussion or under construction. One project involves a gas pipeline to India. Can you tell us more in detail about these agreements?

Mousavian: Transport of oil for Kazakhstan is on the agenda. We are to receive oil from this country in the north, and Iranian oil will be transported, in exchange, in the south. Meanwhile, pipeline projects are under discussion or implementation. At present, gasoline and other oil-related materials are bought from Kazakhstan.

We believe that because of Iran's geographical situation, pipeline networks and markets for the Persian Gulf are the most secure and easiest way for the oil-exporting countries. In this regard, we have entered into negotiations with Ukraine for the export of oil, and with Turkmenistan, for the export of gas to Europe. Like many other projects in the region, a pipeline between Iran, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan is on the agenda.

EIR: Many of the economic joint projects are arranged with members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Can you explain how ECO, which has expanded to include the Central Asian Republics, functions, and what role you think it should play in regional development?

Mousavian: Social and economic development is the main aim of ECO. For this reason, on the basis of the Izmir Agreement, which indicates the aims of cooperation in ECO, the member states in recent years have ratified three proposed plans. The Kuwaita Act, the Istanbul Declaration, and the Almaata Plan were implemented for regional transport networks. The priorities in these plans are trade, industry, agriculture, transport, and communications. The other aim of

ECO is, that by the year 2000, the capitals of the member states will be connected by air, road, and rail networks. For further cooperation among the ECO members, cultural centers and scientific foundations were established. The new strategy of ECO's cooperation for the next 10 years, up to the year 2005, is designed for the fields of trade, transport, and energy and communications.

EIR: How do you see the perspective for overcoming the political crises in the region, which have held up progress on economic cooperation? I am thinking of Afghanistan, of Kashmir, of Armenia-Azerbaijan.

Mousavian: The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the best and most effective way to achieve peace and security in the region, is to end the political and military conflicts like the Karabakh and Tajikistan crises. Prolongation of the conflict in the region will result in the interference of non-regional powers. This will not help, because the implementation of foreign formulas, which ignore the indigenous socio-cultural conditions of the countries, will not end the crises. In my opinion, in regard to Tajikistan, the outlook for solving the crisis, particularly with cooperation and good will among the countries in the region, is promising.

EIR: Since the collapse of communism, and the re-establishment of national sovereignty for the Central Asian republics, there has been massive propaganda in the press, about supposed rivalries among Russia, Turkey, and Iran for "influence" over them. How do you see political and economic relations among these nations for the future? In this context, can you explain the proposed Caspian Sea Cooperation Council?

Mousavian: From the point of view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Organization of Caspian Sea Cooperation is a complementary regional cooperation [body] like ECO, because most of its members are also in ECO. This organization's aim is stronger cooperation and better use of natural resources of the Caspian Sea. The presence of other Central Asian countries will facilitate this aim. We believe the Caspian Sea area has the potential to become a powerful economic center, so we think, in this regard, that it is necessary for the countries around this sea to have stronger ties and cooperation.

EIR: For over one year, there has been a campaign alleging that Iran has developed, or is on the verge of developing, nuclear weapons. The deal with Russia for a nuclear plant in Bushehr, was blocked as a result. Can you tell us about Iran's program for the peaceful use of nuclear energy?

Mousavian: We are not against the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We believe, for economic development, the use of nuclear energy is acceptable and justified. For this purpose, we have accepted all international rules and regulations.