

The Soviets In Africa: Britain's View And Reality

British House of Commons Claims Russians to Invade Europe

The following are extracts from a House of Commons debate on Soviet intentions in Africa on Feb. 6:

Opening the debate, Rear Admiral M.C. Morgan-Giles (Cons. Winchester) warned:

There is hardly any part of Africa where the Russians have not got a finger in the pie, stirring up trouble wherever they went...There are a number of major threats to Britain and the West from Soviet strategy. The first is the risk of denial of raw materials; the second the strategic threat, particularly to the gulf oil; and thirdly the denial of the West of a large part of its uranium supplies. All of these threats amount to loss of western control of the Cape and the Indian Ocean and the Cape route...The Government no longer even pretends to be able to do anything to protect British merchant shipping anywhere outside the limits of the NATO area. Britain must reassess her position in NATO. Britain should progressively withdraw from her national strategy for NATO a large standing army in Germany and substitute as her contribution to NATO a much larger maritime capability...

Continuing the debate, Conservative spokesman for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, John Davies, said that the Soviet actions in Africa must be seen as a long-term effort "to buttress the political hierarchy of Russia." Davies warned:

There is no reason to suspect that Russia will run short of oil in the late 1980s and the material and natural resources involved might be another factor. The danger of miscalculating the African position could give rise to outbursts of an irreversible nature...

Well-known defense expert Julian Amery (Cons. Brighton, Pavilion) warned:

Angola was the first adventure and had come under Soviet control. Mozambique was more a Soviet protectorate than colony. If the Russians can take over in Rhodesia than South Africa will be next on their list. We are watching a couple of half nelsons being established in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa over the lifeblood of the West. Our trade routes and raw materials will be brought under the control of a power recognized as the chief adversary of the West....

The Guardian, London, Jan. 21:

...the ultimate purpose of Soviet military and political intervention in the Horn of Africa seems frighteningly obvious. The Russians are working steadily to establish the basis for naval and air operations that could control the strait of Bab el Mandeb...

Given the scale of their investment in Berbera, the Russians have solid reasons for supporting an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia...that would restore the port to them.

'Horn Being Blown Out of Proportion'

A knowledgeable member of the intelligence community in Washington told NSIPS:

The situation on the Horn of Africa is being blown out of proportion. There are a limited number of Cuban and Soviet personnel in Ethiopia. There is a small amount of fighting. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have zero strategic interests at stake. The strategic importance of the region has been wildly exaggerated. For the Soviets there is only a question of prestige with respect to their support for Ethiopia.

A Rand Corporation spokesman said last week:

No one expects the Soviet Union to go whole hog in the Horn of Africa. The Soviet interest is to free Ethiopia of the problem in the Ogaden with Somalia, so that Ethiopia can concentrate on the Eritrean problem.

Will Ethiopia Invade Somalia?

WHAT LONDON SAYS:

Daily Telegraph. "Threat of a Soviet Backed Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia." by Brian Silk, from Mogadishu, Somalia, Feb. 8:

Russian tanks and planes are leading the Ethiopians back into the Ogaden and smashing their way through the Somali guerrilla army... The tanks have formed a vast desert armada which is brushing all resistance aside as it advances through the northern Ogaden.

It has already pushed more than 100 miles past Somali positions and is moving along a line parallel with the Somali border only a few miles away...If they should swing left, there is nothing to stop them from crossing the border and attacking Hargeisa, the capital of northern Somalia, only 20 miles away.

New York Times. Possibility of Invasion of Somalia, Feb. 8:

Somalis fear a Soviet-aided invasion. There is some debate...about whether the Ethiopians, if they do repulse the Somalis, would continue over the border to take the northern Somali city of Hargeisa and perhaps even the port city of Berbera, cutting the country into two.

WHAT THE STATE DEPT. SAYS:

U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Feb 10:

We have assurances from the Soviet Union that the border won't be crossed.

An African diplomat told NSIPS last week:

Only one man believes the Ethiopian counteroffensive will go beyond the border — Siad Barre. Many African countries are involved in various mediating efforts, and everyone knows that the border will not be crossed for purposes of occupying Somali territory.

U.S. State Dept. press briefing by Hodding Carter III, Feb. 8:

Our goal is not to directly or indirectly fuel the conflict... (in response to a question about U.S. arms sales to Sadat for use in Somalia) If anyone is interested in getting arms from the U.S. for purposes of getting involved in a war, then they won't get U.S. arms...

It is not Administration policy to link Soviet involvement in the Horn to other U.S.-Soviet bilateral agreements... (There are reports of) 1,000 Soviets and 3,000 Cubans in Ethiopia... (However) the Soviets are not involved in the fighting... (Cuban pilots) may have been involved, but we have not been able to confirm this.

Cyrus Vance, Feb. 10:

Events on the Horn cannot help but affect the political atmosphere (between the U.S. and Soviet Union), parti-

cularly with respect to the Indian Ocean, but there is no linkage... (Cuban involvement) will affect the atmosphere in our relations, but our intersection with Cuba is very important and will be kept open.

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At the State Dept. press briefing on Feb. 9, spokesman Reston described the Ethiopian activity as a "counter-attack."

In sharp contrast to the caution demonstrated by the State Dept., President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in an interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, Feb. 13, referred to the possibility of the U.S. being confronted with a Soviet challenge in the Horn: "Just as a Soviet-Cuban intervention is now developing, it can also be reversed — and it should be."

Saudi-American Alliance Under Attack From London And Israel Lobby

A contingent within the Carter Administration is out to undermine the U.S.-Saudi relationship, thus disrupting traditional American interests in the oil-rich Mideast. Working with London-based merchant banks such as Lazard Freres and with the Zionist Lobby, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, Energy Chief James Schlesinger, and Senator Frank Church (D-Id.), this grouping has recently set off a propaganda campaign with an eye to discredit Saudi Arabia as a major oil producer.

The effort is directed not only at the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), but at its partners, Exxon, Socal, Mobil and Texaco, which service the Saudis' 8-9 million barrel a day (mbd) oil production. Moreover, Aramco, which the Saudi government owns 60 percent of, is a major institutional link between traditional progrowth U.S. industrial forces and the Arab world.

On Feb. 9, the *New York Times* printed the second article in two months on the Saudis and Aramco by that famous Glomar Explorer Seymour Hersh. Hersh challenged the efficiency of Aramco's management, alleging that a breakdown in Saudi Arabia's giant oil business is likely due to sloppy Aramco management. Hersh's allegations are based on the combined "findings" of notorious liar James Schlesinger, who just returned from Saudi Arabia, and Sen. Frank Church's Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Affairs, and the General Accounting Office. Hersh also tried to use his claims to build a case for lower estimates of future Saudi production and reserves.

Both Church and GAO coordinator of the study, Phillip Woodside, are presently "investigating" Aramco and Saudi Arabia. The GAO's division of energy and minerals' preliminary findings assert that Saudi Arabia will never be able to increase its production beyond 14 mbd. Hence, Woodside concludes that "major worldwide economic and political instability can be expected sometime between 1983-84." Senator Church — who last called for breaking up the Organization of Petroleum Exporting

Countries oil cartel — has pushed similar alarmist statements on future oil supplies based on incorrect predictions of Saudi output.

Schlesinger Wants It All

According to a well-informed Wall Street oil analyst, the motivation for destroying Aramco is the formation of a corporatist U.S. oil purchasing agency which would control the flow of fuel to the U.S. Schlesinger and his British allies hope to transform the Saudi-U.S. special economic relations which in part has brought 1 million barrels a day of Saudi crude to this country, into the first phase of such a plan. While in Saudi Arabia, Schlesinger proposed that the Saudis provide the U.S. Energy Department's strategic stockpile with 2 to 3 million barrels of crude a day. The stockpile represents the first major step towards transforming the Department of Energy into a major purchasing agency. Ultimately, Schlesinger hopes to eliminate Aramco and take direct control of acquiring Persian Gulf oil. The mastermind of the U.S. purchasing agency idea is Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) economist Morris Adelman.

The Saudis, according to numerous press reports, did not receive Schlesinger's plan with enthusiasm, contrary to rumors emanating from London last week. The Saudi government is, in fact, very close to Aramco since it depends on the corporation not only for its oil production, but a major portion of its industrialization.

Just last month, Aramco submitted a \$22 billion three-year plan to the Petroleum Ministry in Riyadh for an increase in Saudi production capacity from the present 11.8 mbd to 16 mbd by the early 1980s. Numerous analysts indicate that by then, the Saudis could easily be producing nearly 20 mbd depending on global needs.

Saudi-U.S. Relations Pressured

The Saudis have come under considerable pressure to break the Riyadh-Washington axis. Schlesinger's cohorts in the cabinet, Treasury Secretary Blumenthal and Defense Secretary Harold Brown, are jointly implicated.