

British Battle For Control Of U.S. Foreign Policy

Within the coming week, it is entirely possible that the United States will cease to pursue an independent foreign policy in its own national interest. It is possible that the U.S. will accept the leadership of the British Foreign Office and pursue an open East versus West confrontation policy which would sharply increase the danger of general thermonuclear war. Conflict is now raging at the highest levels of the Carter Administration over policy on the Middle East, Africa, and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks—all of which are areas in which the “British option” is extremely “live.”

The Middle East

In the wake of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to the U.S., Secretary of State Cyrus Vance did his best to maintain U.S. options for a regionwide peace settlement in the Middle East by reiterating Administration policy favoring a Palestinian homeland linked to Jordan and by making clear U.S. displeasure with Israel's provocative policy of occupying the disputed territory, stating the settlements were “contrary to international law and should not exist.” This produced a barrage of abuse orchestrated by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, out to compel Egypt to sign a separate peace, who charged that Vance's statements represented only his “personal view” and that he was “taking sides” against Israel. The White House promptly backed Vance. Presidential press secretary Jody Powell asserted that Vance was speaking on behalf of the entire Carter Administration, and that the U.S. had maintained the position that the Sinai settlements contravened international law since the conclusion of the 1967 war.

Moreover, the Administration proceeded, despite an intense U.S. “Israel lobby” drive prior to Sadat's visit, to announce following his departure a package of arms sales highlighted by the sale of 60 F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia, 15 F-15s and 75 F-16 fighter-bombers to Israel, and 50 of the far less sophisticated F-5E fighter aircraft to Egypt.

The decision to go through with the arms sales was read in some quarters as expressing the Administration's determination to stand up to the “Israel Lobby,” which under the leadership of Senators Frank Church (D-Idaho) and Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.), its minions in Congress, had already served notice they would oppose the sales. The Administration also stood up to a direct assault on the Saudis by the same Church-Javits networks, aided by Secretary of Energy James Schles-

inger, who has been putting out the line through Seymour Hersh of the *New York Times* that Saudi oil production was “unreliable.” Church had begun a Senate “investigation” of ARAMCO production capability and had forced the CIA to lower its estimate of that capability by nearly 2 million barrels a day. Meanwhile, rumors circulated that the Saudis were again considering switching the valuation of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) funds from dollars to International Monetary Fund special drawing rights (SDRs). Early last week, however, the *Washington Post* reported that under heavy pressure from the State and Treasury departments and private oil company sources, the CIA estimate had been restored to its original level, and Treasury Secretary Blumenthal reported the Saudis were still committed to the dollar. Shortly thereafter, a barrage of articles emphasizing Saudi economic expansion and strategic importance to the U.S. began appearing in the press.

Whether this stand on behalf of the “moderate Arabs” will open the way to the resumption of meaningful peace negotiations, however, is still very much in question. The “Israel Lobby” is campaigning against the arms sales on the basis that they represent an “erosion of U.S. support” for Israel. The Soviets have already charged, through their news agency TASS, that the arms deals will be used to set up a series of Cold War crises in the region leading to Dayan's Egypt-Israeli “separate peace,” perhaps bringing in Jordan's King Hussein for cosmetic “pan-Arab” purposes.

This is certainly the preferred plan of the British, who are already headlining the failure of the Sadat initiative in their press. Hussein is currently in London.

Meanwhile, the renewed crisis in Lebanon, orchestrated by Dayan through his networks in the Christian camp, is being used to put pressure on Syria to dissolve the Palestine Liberation Organization, in line with U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's “bye-bye PLO” scenario. Highly placed moderate Arab diplomatic sources are afraid this strategy will succeed in killing the Sadat initiative in the near term. The Carter Administration is already defending the arms sales as necessary to defend the Saudis and Egyptians against the “radical pro-Soviet” Iraq and South Yemen.

Horn of Africa

Efforts by Vance to cool the British-manufactured crisis in the Horn of Africa, which were also notable this

past week, are subject to the same British "judo" operation. Although Vance announced he had assurances from the Soviet Union that the Ethiopian counteroffensive in the Ogaden region would not spill over into an invasion of Somalia, the British immediately tried to reheat the situation with the line that "diplomatic sources in London" were predicting joint U.S.-British intervention on behalf of the Somalis if the border were crossed. The *Guardian* added a new twist, reporting the Carter Administration was viewing the Saudis and Egypt as "proxy arms suppliers to Somalia." Even a statement by State Department spokesman Kenneth Brown that the U.S. would not construe "hot pursuit" raids by Ethiopian forces in Solamian territory as a full-scale invasion failed to quell the crisis-mongering British press.

Arms Limitation

A lengthy blast from the Soviet daily *Pravda* last weekend targeting U.S. congressional critics of SALT negotiations provided the occasion for further Cold War buildup. *New York Times* reporter Richard Burt, associated with the semi-official British think-tank the Institute of International Strategic Studies, immediately began circulating the story that the *Pravda* article meant a deferral of a SALT agreement beyond the November elections in the U.S., that Congress might "demand the right to approve any continuing extension of the 1972 SALT accord" still in effect. Syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak singled out U.S. SALT negotiator Paul Warnke as having incurred White House displeasure for a leak that his Arms Control and Disarmament Agency opposed the plane sales to Egypt and the Saudis. Columnist Victor Zorza portrayed Zbigniew Brzezinski as the chief "hidden adversary" feared by the Soviets on SALT and gloated "if Brzezinski is the hardliner the Russians take him to be, and if he has the influence on the President that they suspect he has, then the diplomatic and strategic game is being played for higher stakes than it otherwise would be. In a game for higher stakes, the United States, with greater resources behind it, is the more likely winner — so long as the game is kept to conventional stakes and stays away from nuclear ones."

It is widely believed in Washington that Brzezinski was responsible for the front-page stories in last week's press that the Soviets had increased the number of their pilots in Cuba in order to permit the Cubans to fly more missions in Ethiopia, which prompted loud editorial objections about "Soviet imperialism and Cuban tools" in the *New York Times*.

Press Analyzes Arms Deal; Builds Cold War

New York Times, editorial, "Planes for Peace?", by James Reston, Feb. 15:

Those 200 planes President Carter promised on Valentine's Day to send to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were not intended as instruments of war but as instruments of peace. They were, in effect, political

Valentines. That is the lace-embroidered message out of Washington....

In more direct terms, the President simply found himself in a box. He could have done nothing and risked the collapse of the talks or the threatened resignation of Mr. Sadat—which is taken seriously here—or given everybody the promise of planes in the future. It was a case of a beautiful theory (cutting arms shipments) being murdered by a gang of brutal facts. So Mr. Carter played for time.

New York Times, editorial, "Soviets as Pilots, Cubans as Tools," Feb. 15:

It is a neat, and cynical, division of labor: Cuban pilots flying air strikes against Somali forces in the disputed Ogaden region of Ethiopia while Soviet pilots take their place minding Cuba's air defenses. It is neat because all the aircraft involved are Soviet MIG's, unfamiliar to Moscow's new Ethiopian clients but well-known to Cubans and Russians. It is cynical because Moscow has evidently decided either that Ethiopia's cause in the Ogaden is not important enough to risk the lives of Soviet pilots, or that Cuban faces in combat look better to Africans than Russian faces. Why else send two contingents of pilots in opposite directions across the seas?

All their protestations notwithstanding, this news brands the Cubans as the tools of Soviet imperial purposes.... To bleed away Cuban forces to the point where Russian pilots must be imported for routine domestic chores is to confess that Soviet foreign interests enjoy priority in Havana even over Cuban defenses. When weighed against Cuban dependence on Soviet economic as well as military help, it turns the Cubans into the world's foremost intercontinental force of mercenaries....

Washington Post, "The Complaints About Warnke," syndicated column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, Feb. 15:

Beyond the F-15 deal, the White House is not happy with Warnke as public advocate for the SALT II agreement he is negotiating with the Soviet Union. Less clearly, the dissatisfaction extends to Warnke's actual negotiating performance, including fears he may be making too many concessions. Most remarkable is the White House desire to Warnke, an early Carter supporter and longtime stalwart in the arms-control community.

The dissatisfaction crystalized in the issue of planes to Saudi Arabia, because that question is perceived within the White House as a test case of whether the president can set his own Mideast policy without Israel's veto. The State Department, Pentagon and National Security Council join the president in supporting jets for the Saudis. Only Warnke's ACDA backs Israel's position....

Washington Post, "Moscow's New SALT Worries," by columnist Victor Zorza, Feb. 15:

The Kremlin has taken the unusual step of warning President Carter that, unless he curbs the hawks within his own administration, the arms-limitation talks could be wrecked, and that that "can have only one outcome: a

sharp increase in the danger of a nuclear missile catastrophe.”...

By showing Carter how concerned it is about Brzezinski's views, it may persuade the president that his national security adviser is a good man to have around for more reasons than all the obvious ones. If Brzezinski is the hard-liner that the Russians take him to be, and if he has the influence on the president that they suspect he has, then the diplomatic and strategic game is played for higher stakes than it otherwise would be. In a game for higher stakes the United States, with the greater resources behind it, is the more likely winner — so long as the game is kept to conventional stakes, and stays away from the nuclear ones.

Washington Post, editorial, "The Aircraft Sales: Why Now?," Feb. 16:

...President Carter were wise, in our view, to make it a package deal.

Whether he has struck precisely the right military

balance, nobody can say with certainty. But our hunch is that the military effect of these transactions may be of less importance than their psychological and diplomatic effect. And this brings us to the question of whether the timing was right. The announcement of a wholly new sort of American arms sale to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, coupled with sales to Israel that were considerably below that country's requests, was bound to unhinge the Israelis at a particularly delicate moment. Israel and its supporters in this country had already sensed what seemed to them to be a sharp swing in American public opinion—and in the sentiment of American policymakers—in the general direction of President Sadat. For that reason it might have been more sensible to delay all three sales until there was more evidence that the negotiating process set in motion at Jerusalem had been gotten more firmly back on the track. Instead, the arms sales have given symbolic confirmation to Israel's worst fears....

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Pravda Cites Problems In Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

Pravda on Feb. 11 carried a full-page statement on the status of the SALT negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR. In addition to its opening and concluding summary statements, the Pravda article commented in detail on most of the issues and weapons directly involved in the negotiations. The most important of these comments are included in the excerpted and condensed translation from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service which follows.

It seemed that the go-ahead had been finally given for these great and important matters. However, as the facts show, this development of events is not to the liking of forces in the United States who are not pleased with the positive development of Soviet-American relations and are constantly trying to retard or even wreck altogether the accord on strategic arms limitation. They are stubbornly striving to make this question the subject of an acute domestic political struggle in the United States. The opponents of the agreement became particularly active when prospects for concluding it emerged.

These forces operate in various ways. Figures, particularly high-ranking retired military men, "specialist theorists" on strategic issues, bodies like the so-called "Committee on the Present Danger," and certain press organs playing the role of direct advocates for the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex, openly oppose any arms limitation agreements with the USSR and are urging the buildup of military efforts and the securing of military supremacy over the USSR. Manipulating the thesis of the defense of U.S. "national security interests," they are shamelessly concocting something like

scenarios for waging nuclear war: waging, not preventing, war. They are calculating how many nuclear warheads and bombs would be needed for a strike against such-and-such a country. The people want peace and stable detente, but these men are pondering what else to invent to destroy people.

The opponents of detente in the United States have no interest in peace. Essentially they are also acting at variance with their own country's vital interests, no matter how much they might expatiate to the contrary....

In addition to the open opponents of an agreement on limiting strategic arms, there are also figures in the United States who do not appear to oppose an agreement directly but who in fact strive by every means to erect more and more obstacles to its conclusion. All this is done on the outwardly decent pretext of trying to "retouch" or "improve" the agreement. True, when the government fails, in their opinion, to heed their arguments sufficiently, these figures do cast aside their masks and start accusing it openly of being too "soft" and "compliant" toward the Soviet Union at the talks. Then even the outward difference between them and the open opponents of an agreement disappears.

They would like to "retouch" the agreement being worked out in such a way as to undermine the fundamental principle of equality and identical security for the sides and to obtain clear advantages for the United States to the detriment of the Soviet Union's security. Or, if that proves impossible, they at least want to further delay and complicate the reaching of an agreement.

The Soviet side has repeatedly stressed that there must be no illusions that the USSR will accept limitations which give one-sided advantages to the United States. Those American figures who try to instill in public opinion the idea that unacceptable agreement terms can be imposed on the Soviet Union are doing their people a real disservice....

It is necessary to lay particular stress on the dangerous nature of attempts to leave loopholes so that cruise