

Carter's 'national unity' on Iran falls apart

by Kathleen Murphy

The jerrybuilt structure of national unity, hastily slapped together by the Carter administration to provide an aura of support for its incompetent handling of the Iranian crisis, is falling to pieces.

Following grumblings two weeks ago from Jerry Brown and Edward Kennedy to the effect that President Carter was "hiding behind the hostages" by refusing to participate in a nationally televised debate in Iowa, the Republican Party has initiated an opportunistic campaign to exploit a crisis which they helped to create in order to boost their own designs on the presidency. The GOP offensive signifies that the New York Council on Foreign Relations' plan to install a Republican "strong man" in the presidency is now on in earnest.

'Who Lost Iran?'

The GOP officially launched its "Who Lost Iran?" tactic on New Year's Day. Announcing that "it's time to take the gloves off," Republican National Committee Chairman Bill Brock issued a widely publicized statement which charged Carter with failing to develop a policy "that would protect American interests...and discourage repetition elsewhere of the barbaric actions taken in Iran." Terming Senate ratification of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty "unthinkable," in the context of the Soviet Union's move into Afghanistan, Brock called Carter's "policy of patience" a "policy of deception" whose purpose "seems to be to make the American people believe we have a policy appropriate to the multiple crises in the Middle East."

Brock's statement, which also included an invitation to the Republican presidential candidates to break their

silence on the administration's conduct of foreign policy, was the signal for a coordinated outpouring of criticism from various GOP spokesmen.

Since then, nearly every Republican presidential hopeful has denounced Carter's foreign policy in nearly identical terms, with the Jan. 5 Iowa debate providing a national, if rather low-key, forum for the Republicans' theme: the present administration is weak and passive in dealing with the Soviet Union.

The Republican Party intends to up the pressure over the coming weeks as the international situation worsens. According to Brock's aide, the GOP defense advisory committee, whose members include such well-known hawks as William Kintner and former NATO ambassador Robert Strausz-Hupe (both colleagues of Alexander Haig's at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia), will be meeting during January to develop further position papers critical of various aspects of the administration's foreign policy. These will no doubt be transmitted to the public through the Republican candidates. As Brock's assistant told *EIR*: "Once you've started talking about these things, you just can't stop."

Henry Kissinger is also getting in on the act, but from a somewhat different angle. In a Jan. 4 interview with James Reston of the *New York Times*, Kissinger took a "soft cop" role, claiming to be interested in forging a new, nonpartisan national unity, if only Carter would let the Republicans take over the show. In a foreign policy speech in Boston three days later, the former Secretary of State and otherwise a loud critic of the Carter administration, announced that "until we come to some national agreement (on how to wield American power) on a

nonpartisan basis, we will continue to oscillate between extremes of panic and extremes of conciliation" that have characterized the last decade. In a press conference afterwards, Kissinger defended the actions Carter has taken in response to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan.

While Kissinger may be attempting to negotiate a position in Carter's cabinet for himself, some sources report that a faction within the New York Council on Foreign Relations is toying with the idea of establishing a crisis-management oriented "government of national unity," a development that would de facto supersede the November presidential elections.

Carter set for a fall

In any event, it is incontestable that Carter is on the political skids. The dominant theme in the major national media this past week has been the disastrous ramifications which the Iran stalemate and the Afghani events hold for Carter's political future. A just released ABC/Harris poll reports that the American electorate is "losing patience" with Jimmy Carter's handling of the Iranian crisis, and that his sudden popularity over the last two months is about to evaporate. The poll reports that 53 percent of American voters will judge Carter's Iran policy a failure if the hostages aren't released in three weeks; that figure will jump to 74 percent if the situation isn't resolved within three months. The poll also claims that 58 percent of the voters agree with Ted Kennedy's criticisms of the shah of Iran, as opposed to 44 percent three weeks.

The deteriorating domestic economic situation isn't helping Carter much either. His embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union is already wreaking havoc on the commodities exchanges and drawing unprecedented anger from the farming community.

Also a potential trouble spot for Carter is the Bert Lance case. Lance, a close personal friend of the President, is going to trial next week on the bank fraud and conspiracy charges which forced Carter to dismiss him from his cabinet post in 1978. The Jan. 9 *Christian Science Monitor* ominously predicts that Carter will be dragged through the mud when the Lance case, the international crisis situation, and the domestic economic scene all converge in mid-January.

The Republican attack on Carter has been picked up by Democratic Party presidential contenders Jerry Brown and Ted Kennedy, both of whom have blasted Carter's policies in Iran and Afghanistan in the wake of the Brock statement.

The alternatives

Yet for all their sound and fury, none of Carter's Republican opponents—nor Brown or Kennedy—are

offering anything that could be termed a significant improvement over the present administration's policies.

The GOP's proposed cures for the series of Carter foreign policy fiascos are worse than the disease. Representative is John Connally's suggestions for dealing with the hostage-taking in Iran. Campaigning in New Hampshire this week, the Texas tough guy blasted Carter for inaction on Iran and Afghanistan, and proposed that the U.S. consider "disrupting" Iranian oil fields—in other words, impose an oil embargo on ourselves and Western Europe!

Connally's proposal is even more criminal than it first appears. His deliberate devaluation of the U.S. dollar in August 1971 ushered in the first phase of the New York Council on Foreign Relations program for controlled economic disintegration. The CFR policy is the root cause of the current international strategic situation.

As for George Bush, the other major GOP candidate who stands to benefit from "Persagate," he can be held directly responsible for the Khomeini regime through his collaboration with the liberals in dismantling the CIA's intelligence capabilities while head of the agency in 1975.

On the Democratic Party side, neither Kennedy nor Brown are even able to present themselves as viable candidates. In this context, Democratic Party presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche has issued a statement to his fellow party members identifying his unique capacity to lead them to victory in November. "Cartergate is on," says LaRouche, "and the GOP is confident that the Democratic Party won't be able to stop their march into the White House. Those Democrats who endorse either Carter or Kennedy are wasting their time, money, and efforts. This leaves only the fourth of the leading Democratic Party candidates, myself, as a credible champion for the Democratic voters in general."

The stick....

Since Republican National Committee Chairman Bill Brock issued his New Year's Day assault on Jimmy Carter's foreign policy, nearly every GOP presidential candidate has followed suit. The following is a sampling of what they are saying:

John Connally. President Carter "is failing to recognize the facts of life. It is absolutely unbelievable that a President could sit there for three years and be deceived about what is happening in Iran or Afghanistan or be surprised about the Soviet Union and the actions they are taking. That, frankly, is the most frightening statement that the President could have made. It concerned

me more than the lack of action over the last 60 days.” (Connally was referring to Carter’s statement that he had drastically changed his opinion about the Soviet Union in the wake of its Afghanistan invasion.)

“He should be out trying to mobilize the whole world against the Soviet Union. We’re witnessing the Soviet Union doing now precisely what Hitler did in the 1930’s when he moved (across Europe).”

Ronald Reagan. “The only thing that surprises me is that the President is surprised (about the Soviet initiative).

Howard Baker. “We will not be able to avoid future Iran until the U.S. reestablishes the fact that it protects its vital interests by whatever means necessary. I would tell the Russians that the time is over when we will tolerate adventurist Russian foreign policy.

Bob Dole. Carter bears “a heavy responsibility” for the Iranian crisis. “I am not certain that President Carter may be doing all he can, but just waiting for something to happen. The time may come, perhaps very soon, when we have to impose a strict embargo of our own—at least to make preparations to shut off any imports into Iran.”

Bush. “I feel an increasing frustration and sense of urgency” about the U.S. position in the world, said Bush, adding that he doesn’t want to get involved with the other candidates in trying to “out-macho each other” by urging ever tougher action by the U.S.”

...and carrot

In an interview with James Reston which appeared in the Jan. 4 New York Times, Henry Kissinger called on President Carter to bring the Republicans in to negotiate a new national unity coalition. Excerpts follow.

I think the administration has not been sufficiently appreciative of the facts of power, so it isn’t that I would not favor a firmer policy. ...

The only time Carter has not done well recently is when he has perhaps excessively hid behind the national unity on Iran.

I’ve made my own criticisms and I may make them again on a philosophical level, but I think that if the administration wanted to put together a really nonpartisan consensus and stop playing Mickey Mouse games with the Republicans, they’d have an obligation to cooperate ... and so far as I have any influence, I would support such an effort.

Hirsch panel: ‘No scientific

“The technology is available today to develop magnetic fusion ... in the 1990s, about two decades earlier than the current Department of Energy plan.” So stated Congressman Mike McCormack, the Washington democrat who chairs the House Subcommittee on Energy Use and Production. The subcommittee reported in two days of testimony Dec. 11 and 12 that there are “no scientific or technical barriers” to meeting the 1990 timetable. The single difficulty, the subcommittee agrees, is “the current lack of funding” of the U.S. effort and “the current Carter administration policy” to delay fusion development for another 40 years.

The Fusion Advisory Panel, convened in summer 1979 by McCormack, represents the nation’s leading fusion scientists as well as the top management of U.S. engineering, industrial, and aerospace corporations. The panel heard presentations from some of the leading scientists at the national laboratories and from the Office of Fusion of the Department of Energy.

Serving on the panel are Dr. Robert L. Hirsch, Exxon Research and Engineering Company who chairs the panel; Dr. Richard E. Balzhiser, Electric Power Research Institute; Dr. Robert Conn, University of Wisconsin Department of Nuclear Engineering; Ersel Evans, Westinghouse Hanford Company; Dr. T. Kenneth Fowler, Lawrence Livermore Laboratories; Dr. Harold Furth, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory; Joseph G. Gavin, Jr., Grumman Corporation; Henry K. Hebel, Boeing Engineering; Dr. John W. Landis, Stone & Webster Engineering; Dr. Tihoro Ohkawa, General Atomic Company; Robert I. Smith, New Jersey Public Service Gas and Electric Company; and Dr. Alvin Trivelpiece, Science Applications, Inc.

Both Energy Secretary Charles Duncan and Deputy Energy secretary John Sawhill ignored formal invitations to testify before the panel. But the Dec. 11 appearance by Edwin Kintner, director of the DOE’s Office of Fusion Energy, indicates the high level of optimism for the frontier technology that still exists among the Energy Department’s scientific and research personnel.