

Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily

Volume XXII, No. 46

Monday, March 15, 2004

Founded in 1972

Produced at least 200 times a year

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Rôle of US Former Pres. Carter Emerging in Illegal Financial Demands on Shah of Iran

Exclusive. Analysis. By Alan Peters,¹ GIS. Strong intelligence has begun to emerge that US President Jimmy Carter attempted to demand financial favors for his political friends from the Shah of Iran. The rejection of this demand by the Shah could well have led to Pres. Carter's resolve to remove the Iranian Emperor from office.

The linkage between the destruction of the Shah's Government — directly attributable to Carter's actions — and the Iran-Iraq war which cost millions of dead and injured on both sides, and to the subsequent rise of radical Islamist terrorism makes the new information of considerable significance.

Pres. Carter's anti-Shah feelings appeared to have ignited after he sent a group of several of his friends from his home state, Georgia, to Tehran with an audience arranged with His Majesty directly by the Oval Office and in Carter's name. At this meeting, as reported by Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda to some confidantes, these businessmen told the Shah that Pres. Carter wanted a contract, previously awarded to Brown & Root to build a huge port complex at Bandar Mahshahr, to be cancelled and as a personal favor to him to be awarded to the visiting group at 10 percent above the cost quoted by Brown & Root.

The group would then charge the 10 percent as a management fee and supervise the project for Iran, passing the actual construction work back to Brown & Root for implementation, as previously awarded. They insisted that without their management the project would face untold difficulties at the US end and that Pres. Carter was "trying to be helpful". They told the Shah that in these perilous political times, he should appreciate the favor which Pres. Carter was doing him.

According to Prime Minister Hoveyda, the Georgia visitors left a stunned monarch and his bewildered Prime Minister speechless, other than to later comment among close confidantes about the hypocrisy of the US President, who talked glibly of God and religion but practiced blackmail and extortion through his emissaries.

The multi-billion dollar Bandar Mahshahr project would have made 10 percent “management fee” a huge sum to give away to Pres. Carter’s friends as a favor for unnecessary services. The Shah politely declined the “personal” management request which had been passed on to him. The refusal appeared to earn the Shah the determination of Carter to remove him from office.

Carter subsequently refused to allow tear gas and rubber bullets to be exported to Iran when anti-Shah rioting broke out, nor to allow water cannon vehicles to reach Iran to control such outbreaks, generally instigated out of the Soviet Embassy in Tehran. There was speculation in some Iranian quarters — as well as in some US minds — at the time and later that Carter’s actions were the result of either close ties to, or empathy for, the Soviet Union, which was anxious to break out of the longstanding US-led strategic containment of the USSR, which had prevented the Soviets from reaching the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.

Sensing that Iran’s exports could be blocked by a couple of ships sunk in the Persian Gulf shipping lanes, the Shah planned a port which would have the capacity to handle virtually all of Iran’s sea exports unimpeded.

Contrary to accusations leveled at him about the huge, “megalomaniac” projects like Bandar Mahshahr, these served as a means to provide jobs for a million graduating high school students every year for whom there were no university slots available. Guest workers, mostly from Pakistan and Afghanistan were used to start and expand the projects and Iranians replaced the foreigners as job demand required, while essential infrastructure for Iran was built ahead of schedule.

In late February 2004, Islamic Iran’s Deputy Minister of Economy stated that the country needed \$18-billion a year to create one-million jobs and achieve economic prosperity. And at the first job creation conference held in Tehran’s Amir Kabir University, Iran’s Student News Agency estimated the jobless at some three-million. Or a budget figure of \$54-billion to deal with the problem.

Thirty years earlier, the Shah had already taken steps to resolve the same challenges, which were lost in the revolution which had been so resolutely supported by Jimmy Carter.

A quarter-century after the toppling of the Shah and his Government by the widespread unrest which had been largely initiated by groups with Soviet funding — but which was, ironically, to bring the mullahs rather than the radical-left to power — *Ayatollah* Shariatmadari's warning that the clerics were not equipped to run the country was echoed by the Head of Islamic Iran's Investment Organization, who said: "We are hardly familiar with the required knowledge concerning the proper use of foreign resources both in State and private sectors, nor how to make the best use of domestic resources." Not even after 25 years.

Historians and observers still debate Carter's reasons for his actions during his tenure at the White House, where almost everything, including shutting down satellite surveillance over Cuba at an inappropriate time for the US, seemed to benefit Soviet aims and policies. Some claim he was inept and ignorant, others that he was allowing his liberal leanings to overshadow US national interests.

The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office had enough doubts in this respect, even to the extent of questioning whether Carter was a Russian mole, that they sent around 200 observers to monitor Carter's 1980 presidential campaign against Ronald Reagan to see if the Soviets would try to "buy" the presidency for Carter.

In the narrow aspect of Carter setting aside international common sense to remove the US' most powerful ally in the Middle East, this focused change was definitely contrary to US interests and events over the next 25 years proved this.

According to Prime Minister Hoveyda, Jimmy Carter's next attack on the Shah was a formal country to country demand that the Shah sign a 50-year oil agreement with the US to supply oil at a fixed price of \$8 a barrel. No longer couched as a personal request, the Shah was told he should heed the contract proposal if he wished to enjoy continued support from the US. In these perilous, political times which, could become much worse.

Faced with this growing pressure and threat, the monarch still could not believe that Iran, the staunchest US ally in the region, other than Israel, would be discarded or maimed so readily by Carter, expecting he would be prevailed upon by more experienced minds to avoid destabilizing the regional power structure

and tried to explain his position. Firstly, Iran did not have 50-years of proven oil reserves that could be covered by a contract. Secondly, when the petrochemical complex in Bandar Abbas, in the South, was completed a few years later, each barrel of oil would produce \$1,000 worth of petrochemicals so it would be treasonous for the Shah to give oil away for only \$8.

Apologists, while acknowledging that Carter had caused the destabilization of the monarchy in Iran, claim he was only trying to salvage what he could from a rapidly deteriorating political situation to obtain maximum benefits for the US. But, after the Shah was forced from the throne, Carter's focused effort to get re-elected via the Iran hostage situation points to less high minded motives.

Rumor has always had it that Carter had tried to negotiate to have the US hostages, held for 444 days by the Islamic Republic which he had helped establish in Iran, released just before the November 1980 election date, but that opposition (Republican) candidate Ronald Reagan had subverted, taken over and blocked the plan. An eye-witness account of the seizure by "students" of the US Embassy on November 4, 1979, in Tehran confirms a different scenario.

The mostly "rent-a-crowd" group of "students" organized to climb the US Embassy walls was spearheaded by a *mullah* on top of a Volkswagen van, who with a two-way radio in one hand and a bullhorn in the other, controlled the speed of the march on the Embassy according to instructions he received over the radio. He would slow it down, hurry it up and slow it down again in spurts and starts, triggering the curiosity of an educated pro-Khomeini vigilante, who later told the story to a friend in London.

When asked by the vigilante for the reason of this irregular movement, the stressed cleric replied that he had instructions to provide the US Embassy staff with enough time to destroy their most sensitive documents and to give the three most senior US diplomats adequate opportunity to then take refuge at the Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry rather than be taken with the other hostages. Someone at the Embassy was informing the Foreign Ministry as to progress over the telephone and the cleric was being told what to do over his radio.

The vigilante then asked why the Islamic Government would bother to be so accommodating to the Great Satan and was told that the whole operation was planned in advance by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan's revolutionary Government with Pres. Carter in return for Carter having helped depose the

Shah and that this was being done to ensure Carter got re-elected. “He helped us, now we help him” was the matter-of-fact comment from the cleric.

In 1978 while the West was deciding to remove His Majesty Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi from the throne, Shariatmadari was telling anyone who would listen not to allow “*Ayatollah*” Ruhollah Khomeini and his *velayat faghih* (Islamic jurist) version of Islam to be allowed to govern Iran. Ayatollah Shariatmadari noted: “We mullahs will behave like bickering whores in a brothel if we come to power ... and we have no experience on how to run a modern nation so we will destroy Iran and lose all that has been achieved at such great cost and effort.”²

Pres. Carter reportedly responded that Khomeini was a religious man — as he himself claimed to be — and that he knew how to talk to a man of God, who would live in the holy city of Qom like an Iranian “pope” and act only as an advisor to the secular, popular revolutionary Government of Mehdi Bazargan and his group of anti-Shah executives, some of whom were US-educated and expected to show preferences for US interests.

Carter’s mistaken assessment of Khomeini was encouraged by advisors with a desire to form an Islamic “green belt” to contain atheist Soviet expansion with the religious fervor of Islam. Eventually all 30 of the scenarios on Iran presented to Carter by his intelligence agencies proved wrong, and totally misjudged Khomeini as a person and as a political entity.

Today, Iranian-born, Grand *Ayatollah* Ali Al-Sistani, the dominant Shia leader in Iraq faces Shariatmadari’s dilemma and shares the same “quietist” Islamic philosophy of *sharia* (religious law) guidance rather than direct governing by the clerics themselves. Sistani’s “Khomeini” equivalent, militant *Ayatollah* Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr, was gunned down in 1999 by then-Iraqi Pres. Saddam Hussein’s forces. Sadr’s son, 30-year-old Muqtada al-Sadr, lacks enough followers or religious seniority/clout to immediately oppose Sistani but has a hard core of violent followers biding their time.

According to all estimates, the young Sadr waits for the June 2004 scheduled handover of power in Iraq, opening the way for serious, militant intervention on his side by Iranian clerics. The Iranian clerical leaders, the successors to Khomeini, see, far more clearly than US leaders and observers, the parallels between 1979-80 and 2004: as a result, they have put far more effort into activities designed to ensure that “Reagan’s successor”, US Pres. George W. Bush, does not win power.

Footnotes:

1. © 2004 Alan Peters. The name "Alan Peters" is a *nom de plume* for a writer who was for many years involved in intelligence and security matters in Iran. He had significant access inside Iran at the highest levels during the rule of the Shah, until early 1979.
2. See *Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily*, March 2, 2004: *Credibility and Legitimacy of Ruling Iranian Clerics Unraveling as Pressures Mount Against Them; The Source of Clerical Ruling Authority Now Being Questioned*. This report, also by Alan Peters, details the background of "Ayatollah" Khomeini, the fact that his qualifications for his religious title were not in place, and the fact that he was not of Iranian origin.

The following is a brief and short translation of this article for those with less English understanding.

برای آنانی که انگلیسی بالا را متوجه نشدند.

این نوشتار اشاره به آن دارد که جیمی کارتر برای در زمان زمام داری خود تعدادی از دوستانش را به تهران میفرستد تا شاه را قانع کنند که پروژه بزرگ بندر ماهشهر را باطل نموده و آنرا با ده درصد قیمت اضافی به دوستان کارتر بدهد و در مقابل شرکت های دوست آقای کارتر ضمن یاری به انتخابات کارتر اداره و مدیریت پروژه ماهشهر را بعهده گرفته و از بابت آن ده دصد اضافی بهره مند گردند. این مطلب را بعدا امیر عباس هویدا به دوستان نزدیک خود ابراز داشته بود. مسلما شاه از این پیشنهاد عدم استقبال را نموده و به آنان جواب منفی داده بود. بعد ها دوستان کارتر در پیشنهاد دیگری میخواستند شاه را مجبور کنند تا قرارداد نفتی 50 ساله ای با آمریکا به قیمت ثابت بشکه ای 8 دلار امضا کند که شاه باز هم قبول نکرده بود. اصلا معلوم نبود که 30 سال پیش ایران برای 50 سال آینده نفت به آن اندازه داشته باشد یا خیرد.

و اضافه میکند که مهدی بازرگان برای خود شیرینی و بیاس خدماتی که کارتر در به حکومت رسانده آنان یاری نموده بود طی نقشه از قبل کشیده شده ای عده ای دانشجو را با استفاده از یک وانت فولکس واگن که بجای نردبان صعود به دیوار سفارت آمریکا استفاده شد به داخل سفارت هدایت نمود که بعد از مدتی با آزاد سازی گروگان ها امتیازی برای کارتر بحساب آمده و ریاست جمهوری وی را تضمین کند. که این نقشه با آگاهی که حزب جمهوریخواه داشت نقش بر آب شد و آنقدر آن گروگان ها نگهداری شدند تا کارتی شکست خود و نقشه ای که برای فرستادن کارتر به کاخ سفید کشیده شده بود ریگان را به کاخ سفید برد.

از قرار یک ملا رهبری این عملیات را بعهده داشته و با بیسیم مرتبا دستورات لازم را میگرفت و با شل کردن عملیات و سرعت بخشیدن به آن مسئله نفوذ به سفارت آمریکا را تنظیم میکرد که بعدا در لندن به یکی از دوستانش گفته بود اینکار را میکریم تا سه نفر از کارمندان سفارت به وزارت خارجه برسند و وقت کافی بوده باشد تا اسناد محرمانه داخل سفارت نابود شده باشند.

در همان زمان شریعت مداری مرتبا اعلام میکرده است ما نمیتوانیم حکومت را اداره کنیم و ما ملایان قدرت درک مسائل فنی و منابع و اقتصادی را نداریم که هنوز هم بعد از 25 سال ندارند.

همین مسئله در مورد آیت الله سیستانی در عراق اتفاق میافتد و او نیز مانند خمینی زیر فشار پسر آیت الله محمد باقر صدر، مقتدا صدر در ضمن نا آگاهی فشاری مشابه خمینی وارد میسازد که همانند کارتر مانع پیروزی جورج بوش بشوند.

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