P.S. to the NEWS
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A GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Americans are about as deficient in world geography as we are in foreign languages. Only a handful of Americans study any geography after the seventh grade. Only a few knew where Korea and Vietnam are until our boys were boarding the boats to die there.

All of a sudden, as a result of the President's State of the Union speech, a new faraway place is on the lips of the average America: the Persian Gulf. Fortunately only oil and not blood flows there, but Jimmy Carter has threatened that we will defend the Persian Gulf, if necessary, with military force.

Get out a map and see for yourself how economically vital and how militarily indefensible the Persian Gulf is for the United States, and how devastating was the disaster in foreign policy which has precipitated our current predicament. Korea and Vietnam were far better places to fight than the Persian Gulf.

Clustered along one side of the Persian Gulf are the helpless little shiekdoms which produce about twice as many barrels of oil per day as they have people. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates have a population of about 2.4 million and produce about 4.5 million barrels of oil a day. Saudi Arabia has a population of 10 million and produces 9.5 million barrels of oil a day.

One look at the map and anyone can plainly see that the only country with the strategic position, the population, and the military strength to act as a buffer against a Russian push to the Gulf was Iran. That's why the policy of the pre-Carter Administrations was to sell the Shah weapons which he could easily pay for from his production of millions of barrels of oil per day in Iran.

It should have been obvious to anyone who looked at the map two years ago (even to the anti-Shah Americans) that our best chance to keep gasoline in our automobile tanks was to maintain the military strength and stability of a well-armed pro-American

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government in Iran. After all, which is more important: being able to drive your car, or making a futile attempt to impose U.S.-style human rights and due process half way around the world.

Carter's contribution to history was to undermine, humiliate, and then assist in the overthrow of the pro-American government of Iran, the only force in the Persian Gulf area which had a chance of resisting Russian expansionism and a cutoff of oil to the West without American troops. Specifically, Carter demanded that the Shah let the seditionists out of jail, Carter signaled the world that the Shah was on the way out by letting anti-Shah demonstrators humiliate him in front of the White House, and Carter openly let it be known that Khomeini would be recognized by the U.S. Government.

So the pro-American Shah has been replaced by a combination of professionally-agitated street mobs and an anti-American fanatic who is taking Iran back to the fourth century and has executed more people more arbitrarily than the Shah.

Now the same Americans who undermined and helped to chase out the Shah are saying that, in order to protect our oil interests, we must support the Khomeini regime just as soon as it releases the U.S. hostages (who have been held and humiliated for more than three months), and also must support the Pakistan dictatorship (even though that country burned down our embassy a few weeks ago and ridiculed our offer of aid).

In his State of the Union address, Carter called on the United States to defend Persian Gulf oil from the Russians, whose armed forces in Afghanistan are now only 300 miles away. If the Soviets ignore his ultimatum, it would be first-degree folly to send U.S. troops to an area where the enemy is vastly superior on land and in the air (since Carter cancelled the B-1 bomber).

Carter must have had second thoughts about his vain boast because a week later he and his Secretary of Defense admitted that the United States cannot defend the Persian Gulf "alone." White House spokesmen have been putting out the line that we have a new "Carter doctrine," but they didn't define it. The apt definition is, "Speak loudly and carry a little stick." Unfortunately, in the real world, aggressors are not impressed.

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