P.S. to the NEWS
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SOVIETS IN IRAN

The falling dominoes theory, which was proved valid by our bitter experience in Southeast Asia, may be on the verge of being tested again in the Middle East. Iran is the lead country in this drama, and the stakes are far higher for the West than in any of our Far East involvements.

The unique geography of Iran provides the Soviets with a maximum of motivation on the one side and a maximum of opportunity on the other. On the southern side is the Persian Gulf and the warm water ports which have been a centuries-old goal of both the czars and the Communists. Now that the Russians have the largest navy in the world, they lust for warm water ports more than ever before.

What goes through these ports is more important than trade in any previous era. Western Europe gets 70 percent of its oil through the Persian Gulf, Japan 90 percent, and Israel and South Africa get almost all of theirs by that route. It is easy to predict that, if our friends are cut off from their oil, we will be asked to tighten our belts and share ours, no matter what the cost.

On the other side of the country, Iran shares a 1,000-mile border with the Soviet Union and a 500-mile border with Afghanistan, a Soviet puppet since the coup of April 1978. The infiltration of Soviet agents into Iran and the directing of riots and anti-Shah agitation should be one of the easiest assignments ever undertaken by the Soviet KGB and GRU.

There are now about 500,000 Afghans living illegally in Iran, working for half the wages Iranians receive. That makes a tremendous pool of availables for blackmail by the KGB-controlled Afghan secret service. Last year the Afghan foreign minister visited Cuba and met with Iranian guerrillas being trained there. A number of Afghans were arrested during the major demonstrations in Teheran.

There are many thousands of families living along the Soviet-Iranian border with relatives on both sides, especially along the border of the "captive nation" of Armenia. There is quite an Armenian minority in Iran. Iranian residents who want to

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visit their relatives in the U.S.S.R. must seek visas from Soviet consulates in Iran.

About 100 Soviet citizens are accredited as diplomats in Teheran and there are also Soviet consulates in Mashhad, Istahan and Tabriz. About 4,000 Soviet "technicians" are employed in Iran, plus a similar number from East European satellites. Iran has an abundance of Soviet front organizations that serve as natural covers for Soviet KGB operatives such as the Russian hospital in Teheran, the Soviet news agency and publications, the Soviet transport company, insurance company, and trade mission.

The Iranian Communist Party, Tudeh, distributes an underground publication called NAVID on the streets of Teheran which, unlike other left-wing bulletins, is attractively printed by offset. Western observers believe it is printed inside the Soviet embassy.

NAVID is the tipoff to how the Communists have forged a link with Muslim traditionalists for Marxist purposes. While following the Moscow party line, NAVID also preaches the need for "an antidictatorial broad front" with the Muslim clergy in leadership positions, and offers "all our political propaganda and technical resources for the campaign against the Shah."

From the Soviet point of view, an alliance with the Muslims is very profitable. The Soviets can provide the financing and the cadre of organizers trained in riot and revolutionary techniques, and the Muslims can provide the people who go out and get roughed up or killed by the Shah's police. It takes a real ostrich mentality for Americans to believe that the demonstrations in Iran are not Soviet financed and directed. Successful revolutionaries must be fed and armed.

At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union invaded and seized northern Iran and President Truman ordered immediate withdrawal. The Soviets retreated promptly because America then had the world's biggest air force and navy and atomic superiority.

There is no way President Carter can do likewise even though the stakes in Iran are a thousand times greater today. Moscow repeatedly warns Carter against taking action. Carter doesn't even dare send riot-control equipment for fear of offending Brezhnev because we no longer have military superiority over the Soviet Union.

Several years ago, Henry Kissinger asked, "What is strategic superiority? What can you do with it?" Iran is the answer to Henry. If we had strategic superiority today, we could keep Iran from starting the falling of the dominoes in the Middle East.

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