

U.S. motives in visa scrutiny questionable

While there is little doubt as to the legality of immigration officials coming to the University campus with the authority to insist that Iranian students report for interviews and photographs, the motives and justification for such action are less obviously clear-cut.

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If Carter's intent in ordering the visa compliance inspections was to defuse the American people's anger with the hostage situation in Tehran and thus prevent violence against Iranian students in this country, the wholesale scrutiny is an attempt that shows few signs of truly satisfying anyone — from those who would protect the Iranians' rights to free speech to those who would rather see them deported en masse.

If the move was intended as a show of strength to alert the Khomeini government to American unwillingness to once again be an

international patsy, it is a questionable tactic in terms of both decisiveness and influence on Khomeini or his student-soldier activists. It's probable that they not only expect worse of the U.S. government, but also have little concern about the lives and welfare of a few thousand

students whose fate balances (in their eyes) against the Iranian people as a whole. Neither Khomeini nor the Moslem students holding the hostages have shown much respect for human rights.

And if the call for registration verification of Iranian students as aliens in this country was prompted by serious concern that many students are violating the terms of their admission to the United States, why the juxtaposition of events? Has it only, since the embassy takeover, come to

the attention of immigration officials that this is a major problem? The time and event sequence is suspicious at best.

Finally, if the inspection and identification of Iranian students is a preliminary move before a break in diplomatic relations with Iran that would end U.S. willingness to educate Iranians and would send all of them home, the coyness that won't permit an outright announcement of such plans is singularly hesitant viewed in light of current American public feeling.

The wholesale inspection of Iranian students, without concrete suspicion of illegal behavior by individuals, begins to have an unpleasant smell of petty, punitive indulgence by an administration which can't take direct action in any other way. While few Americans can enjoy Iranian students' vocal support of their country's efforts to get the shah returned there, selective denial of free speech, enforced by the threat of deportation, hardly seems the answer.

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Other puppets

I find it hard to understand the reasoning of certain so-called "radical leftists" who, in their semi-logical analyses of the situation in the Middle East, come to the conclusion that the government of Israel is the tool of the "imperialists." There are other governments in the region that fit the role far better.

Egypt is the country that is most clearly in Washington's pocket at the moment. The State Department and Mr. Sadat see eye-to-eye on virtually everything. The U.S. government needs Egypt for vital reasons in its projected struggle with the Soviet Union for Middle East oil. Sadat needs Washington in order to prop up his regime, which has lost the support of almost all other Arab governments. In talking with students from that part of the world, and in reading the remarks made by Sadat himself, one gets the impression that Sadat is simply one more in a long succession of tinhorn dictators the U.S. government has been idiotic enough to support.

Across the Red Sea from Egypt, we find another example of a government that fits into the "imperialistic" scheme of things almost to perfection. The Saudi Arabian government, propped up by massive infusions of American arms and development capital, manages to maintain its hegemony not only over the people of Saudi Arabia, but over Qatar as well. Saudi Arabia, with its reserves of high-quality light-Arabian crude, is the true center of the American strategy. The U.S. government has apparently made commitments to support the Saudi elite against threats, domestic and foreign. Such threats exist in the form of growing awareness among young people of the Arabian Peninsula that the Saudi monarchy is an intolerable anachronism in this age of representative government, and in the presence of a Soviet-backed radical state in South Yemen, complimented by another Soviet-backed, though perhaps less radical, government in Iraq. If only Egyptian-Israeli-Saudi cooperation could be established, the imperial strategists

reason, their position would be secure.

But such is apparently not going to be the case. The Saudi government, in a display of perversity incomprehensible in Washington, refuses to accept the Camp David framework as the basis for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

There are several reasons for this. One is that the Saudi elite is deeply and genuinely anti-Israeli and may never accept the existence of Israel. Secondly, the Saudi government, ever conscious of the threat posed by its radical neighbors, cannot afford to enter into a peace agreement with Israel. Thirdly, there is one line of thought within the Saudi ruling family, represented by Abdullah, a prince and contender for the throne, that favors close relationships with Iraq, and, indirectly, with the Soviet Union. We can be certain that the CIA does not want to see Abdullah come to power. All these factors combine to make the country unstable and unpredictable.

The pro-American clique, headed by Crown Prince Fahd (the most likely successor to the throne) has devised an ingenious strategy to resolve the contradictions inherent in the country's situation. By persuasion punctuated with vague allusions to the vital responsibility of Saudi Arabia to supply the West with oil, the ruling clique has been able slowly to bring Washington around to its point of view. They have convinced the U.S. government that the Saudi-American relation is indispensable to America. The U.S. government will do whatever it can to see to it that the Saudi Government gets what it wants: complete Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including the "holy city" of Jerusalem. (Saudi pronouncements, by the way, never say "East Jerusalem," they just say "the holy city of Jerusalem," and I suspect they mean the entire city.)

Of course, the Arabian-American oil company is in favor of giving the Saudi government what it wants, and has not hesitated to pressure the U.S. government to cooperate. (ARAMCO is owned by

Mobil, Exxon, Texaco and Standard Oil of California.) I am beginning to suspect that these companies also own John Connally, since his Middle East position accords exactly with Saudi desires.

So, moral as condemnations of "Israeli aggression" may sound, they have many economic considerations behind them. I do not think it is ethical for the U.S. government to force Israel to surrender territory it considers vital for its defense, while its anti-Jewish neighbors have not yet decided to make peace. I do not pretend to hope that America can find the will to resist oil pressure.

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Bitter results

Recent events in Iran have shown once again the incongruity of Pres. Carter's foreign policy in Iran. At the beginning of the Iranian revolution earlier this year, the administration tried desperately to preserve the status quo with its symbol enshrined in the person of Shah Pahlavi. Oil interests of the U.S. figured prominently in this willingness to prolong the al-

ready fragile "stability" in Iran and totally ignored what had happened to the Iranian people for the past couple of decades. The moral aspect of this "oil interest first" attitude, U.S. imperialism, great nation chauvinism or whatever you want to call it, is open to a wide variety of interpretations leading to drastic, frequently emotional, conclusions.

With many learned and intelligent advisers around Carter, some native-born Iranians turned Americans from the State Department included, it is surprising to see that Carter and his administration could neither understand what Ayatollah Khomeini and his people have been demanding nor obtain the necessary information in order to take the appropriate steps. With the constant portrayal of Khomeini holding a sword and doing all types of "irrational" things in the newspaper cartoons, a lack of communication developed and bitterness ensued. The outcome of all these failures (to really understand what the Iranians have in their minds) led to the taking of U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the holding of hostages since Nov. 4 and the oil embargo.

The taking of another country's embassy and putting its workers (Americans, Indians and Pakistanis alike) in captivity certainly violated all normal diplomatic procedures. Yet it showed how much the Iranian people are enraged over the question of the shah. It is time now for the U.S. policymakers to really appreciate how much hatred the Iranian people have toward their shah for his allegedly atrocious crimes and how eager they are to extradite the shah to their soil to receive proper judgement and inevitable punishment.

With regards to the lives of the hostages, they will probably not be endangered. This act of holding the hostages differs fundamentally from what the PLO guerillas have done in the past. The PLO guerillas went out with one sole aim in mind: Destroy our enemies without regard to the means sought. The Iranians will probably not commit an international crime in the name of justice for the Iranian people (in order to bring the shah to trial). I only pray that Carter will not act foolishly again.

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