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## The world this week

by Glenn Walton

Global Power Politics

The world scene, hardly cause for optimism in recent months, was marked by unusual unrest, this week. The Middle East, that perennial problem spot, has in particular been racked by rebellion, threats of rebellion, a bonafide invasion, and the continuing hostage drama in Tehran, which entered its third month.

Of great interest was the visit by UN Secretary Kurt Waldheim to the Iranian capital in an attempt to mediate between the U.S. government and the powersthat-be in Iran. It is not clear exactly who is in a position of authority in the hostage problem, as statements by students at the Embassy often contradict the foreign minister. While it is certain that the Ayatollah Khomeini holds ultimate power in his hands, Iran appears to be ungoverned and ungovernable at the moment, a situation that has been complicating any negotiations between Irianian authorities and the outside world. Waldheim returned to New York discouraged by his visit and his failure to meet the Ayatollah, warning that any sanctions by the UN would only strengthen Iranian resis-

Meanwhile, in neighboring Afghanistan a bitter civil war has suddenly become the point of conflict between the world's two superpowers, the

United States and the U.S.S.R. The Russian troops that have streamed into Afghanistan in the past two weeks have caused what now appears to be a return to Cold War politics.

The long awaited SALT II treaty between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., for one, now seems, if not doomed, at least indefinitely postponed. Speculation on Russian motives is widespread. Historically the Soviet Union has always sought access to a warm-water port, and it is being surmised that the invasion of Afghanistan is only the prelude to further expansion southwards. -a move that would affect Pakistan, which, President Carter has just announced, will be receiving military aid from the U.S.

In the chain-reaction of events, one more of this week may affect significantly the power balance in the Indian subcontinent: Indira Gandhi has just won the parliamentary elections in India, completing an amazing comeback from scandal and even imprisonment for election irregularities a year ago. The former and now future Prime Minister has made no secret of her pro-Russian feelings, and it will be interesting what stand she takes on the present situation. India's neighbor, the People's Republic of China, has just concluded a military pact with the United States, a move that, along with Carter's economic sanctions against the Soviet Union, must have the Kremlin worried.

It would be premature to see a pattern in all of these power politics, but it is certain that the Soviet Union has used the Iranian situation to further its expansionistic ends. The reaction of its opponents and potential opponents, is worth watching.

#### Canadian Elections

After all the talk of war and the manoeuverings in the Middle East, the Canadian election (here we go again) is strictly a case of deja-vu. An emerging issue is off-shore mineral rights in Newfoundland, an issue that has assumed great significance in recent weeks with the ongoing oil exploration that promises great dividends for that province (or the country). Provincial Sovereignty over natural resources, such as Alberta enjoys, does not apply to off-shore resources, and Prime Minister Clark was in Newfoundland this week to promise voters there that they will get it. The Liberal and New Democrat programs are still being worked out.

Public opinion polls indicate that the Clark government has achieved a record of sorts: it is the most unpopular government in Canadian history according to the Gallup survey, while the Liberals have a hefty lead and the NDP is at a record high in popularity. Key areas in the election will be southern Ontario, as it is unlikely that the Conservative and New Democratic grip on the west and the Liberal hold on Quebec will be broken, despite Clark's reference last week to la belle province as a 'Tory strong-

### Regan to Run

In Nova Scotia, Gerald Regan has announced that he will run for the next Parliament in a Halifax riding. The seat that was won last time around by PC George Cooper by less than 20 votes may be used, if won by Regan, as a springboard to a run for leadership of the federal party, once the present leader Trudeau steps down. Trudeau has stated that this campaign is his last, and if re-elected Prime Minister, he will step down before the end of the next Parliament.

### Comment

### Spectre of War

by Glenn Walton

The U.S., Time Magazine stated in its issue of December 24, 1979, is at the "end of a Vietnam hangover." Jimmy Carter, the man who campaigned for president on a pledge to reduce the defense budget "announced that he would ask Congress for an increase in defense spending of close to 5% a year, adjusted for inflation." The increase, Time says, 'left no doubt that keeping up with the Soviets was the main motive for revising his thinking, but he, (Carter) cited the crisis in Iran as a vivid reminder of the need for a strong and united America. . . which need not bluff or posture in the quiet exercise of its strength.

With that move, the president thus put to rest hopes, on the part of many liberal democrats, that much of the money and effort devoted to the business of war could be channeled, in a post-Vietnam

scenerio, toward development of much-needed peacetime programs (such as universal medical insurance). The lessons (and the debt) of Vietnam have not apparently been strong enough to inhibit the regular increases, in recent years, in defense spending. What's more, whereas a decadr or so ago the American voters seemed (after the long and wasteful Vietnam debacle) fed up with foreign wars a majority of them now would support military action against Iran if the hostages in the Embassy were harmed.

This is sad (if understandable). War inevitably exacts its worst toll on innocent civilians, and the number of people that would be killed in any conflict between Iran and the U.S. (an absurd thought) would far outnumber the 50 or so people now at the mercy of their kidnappers. What is so disturbing about the whole

situation is that a superpower can be almost manipulated by a narrow-minded, irrational despot such as the Ayatollah, whose hold over his people, in my opinion, can only be temporary, given the unfolding chaos, economic and political, that is enveloping his country. It is a tragic flaw in the military mind, however, that places honour above human life, and a perfect case in point is the following:

During the Indochina conflict, the Cambodians seized an American gunboat that was prowling off its shores. No firepower was spared rescuing its crew and from a diplomatic standpoint, the mission was a complete success. A famous photograph taken at the White House shows a gleeful Gerald Ford and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, with a few advisors, in a jovial, post-Mayaguez mood; Ford's rat-

continued on page 20