

Iran situation deteriorates

by Glenn Walton

The Ayatollah's experiment in imposing medieval thinking on his country continues to occupy news space this week as the detainment of American diplomats at their embassy in Tehran continues. President Carter has announced that the U.S. is cutting off Iranian oil imports, which amount to 700,000 to 800,000 barrels of crude oil and refined fuel a day (or 10% of American oil imports). In addition, the president cut off arms shipments to Iran.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council, in a rare display of solidarity, has called on Iran to release the captured Americans. The PLO, increasingly moderate in their dealings, has offered to mediate. Domestically, the cabinet of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan resigned in protest against interference from Moslem mullahs. Khomeini, despite protestations that there will be no dictatorship in Iran, has transferred power to his Revolutionary Council, a mainly religious group over which he exerts a deciding influence. Iran appears to be approaching economic chaos, and ethnic uprisings have resulted in increasing terrorism and clashes with government troops. The most serious development is in Iran's relationship with Iraq, its west-

ern neighbor. A war with that country would create in the Middle East a volatile situation where the moves of surrounding powers, including the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia, would be closely watched.

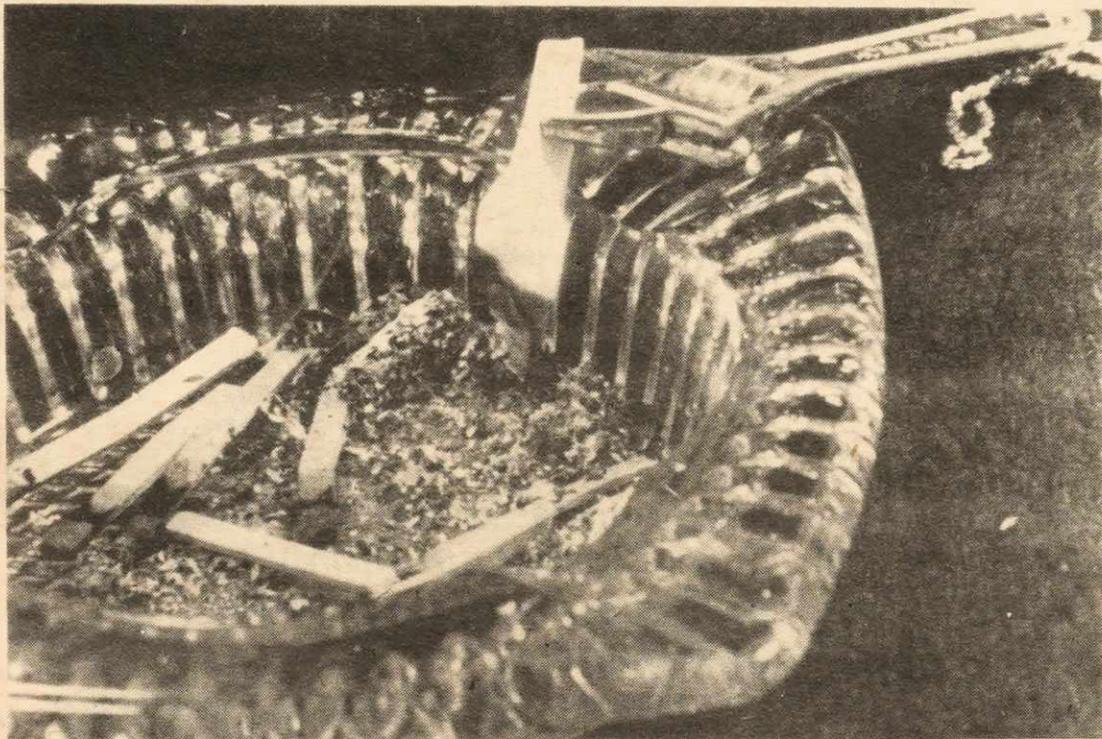
In the U.S., a year from the presidential election, the candidates are off and running. Senator Edward Kennedy, aided by his name and a competent record in the Senate, and Governor Jerry Brown of California, have both declared their intention of seeking President Carter's job. On the Republican side, 7 or 8 men have already entered the race, including front-runner Ronald Reagan. The first primaries are in February and March, and the selection process will continue to national conventions in the summer, where two nominees will face off for the final contest. The campaign promises to be long and platitudinous, in which image will play the major role. One candidate, Philip Crane of Illinois, has already visited New Hampshire 35 times. As if the primaries aren't long and drawn out enough, straw polls are now becoming popular, resulting in non-binding and unofficial statements of support by party members for one or the other of presidential aspirants. Florida caucuses have voted, on the Democratic

side, heavily for Carter (predictably in this right-wing state where Kennedy's liberalism is not well liked). Ultimately, voter interest in the long selection process will suffer: last election only just over half of American voters ever bothered to go to the polls at all.

New shorts: In Canada, the NDP won the seat of former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in a Prince Albert by-election, thus reducing the Clark government's margin of safety (with Socred support) to a single seat.

In another religious state, the Pope has announced that the church is in the red, and appealed to European and American Catholics to chip in. The Vatican is forbidden by its own rules to draw on its tremendous art and real estate holdings for revenue. At the UN representatives of 51 nations met and pledged over \$200 million in support for war-torn Cambodia, from which a steady stream of refugees has fled into Thailand. The Mekong River has been opened by the Vietnamese government to relief supplies, but the Vietnamese, who control most of Cambodia, have refused to allow an American land-bridge of relief supplies to enter the country from Thailand.

Call for legislation



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alienating the fewest number of people. At the same time, approximately one hundred people a day, many of whom are students, are being arrested for simple possession—creating massive backlogs in the court systems, incredible expenditures in terms of police manpower, and irreparable damage to the reputations of minor offenders. Anyone who underestimates the stigma of a criminal record should try finding a job with one: not only can't you be bonded (unless you lie—

records), but the psychological effect is undeniably detrimental.

NORML is trying to make people realize that simply recognizing the validity of its position is not enough: the re-evaluation must be made. To this end their members circulate petitions for decriminalization, opinion-position postcards already addressed to Parliament Hill (no postage required), as well as copies of letters received from the government, in which is stated their line of action: "How best to implement these

proposals is being reviewed by this Government in the light of the information and analysis now available to us." Any show of support to combat this waffling is greatly welcomed

by NORML. Proceeds from benefits such as the Mad Hash bash on November 10, as well as all membership fees and donations, are directed towards this consciousness-raising across the country, and in Ottawa. Petitions, postcards, and information are available at the Gazette office, and from Yvonne Manzer, at 425-6400, ext. 226.

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