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SPECIAL REPORT

THE U.S. GETS TOUGH

Dinner was over, and the East Room at the White House grew quiet. The guests—80 senior congressmen and senators—craned forward as Jimmy Carter began his briefing on Iran and Afghanistan. The President sat in a Hepplewhite armchair, his foreign-policy counselors arrayed at his sides, a colored map of Southwest Asia on the easel at his back. Roughly 6,500 miles to the east, the 50 American hostages languishing at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran were approaching their twelfth week in captivity. And just over the border in Afghanistan, 85,000 Soviet troops, looking very much like they meant to stay, were clearing the roads westward from Kabul toward the Iran border. So the President didn't mince any words last week. Looking at his guests, he said: "The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the greatest threat to peace since the second world war."

The language was harsh and perhaps a bit hyperbolic; no Korea, Cuban missile crisis or Vietnam seemed at hand. But transfixed by the unraveling chaos in Southwest Asia, the President clearly meant to change his approach to the Soviet Union. Along the U.S.S.R.'s southern periphery, he sketched the first outlines of a tough new posture. Last week Turkey agreed to let the U.S. continue to use 26 military and intelligence installa-

tions on the Soviet Union's southwestern flank. Word leaked out that the U.S. and Egypt had conducted joint air exercises, and that the British had agreed to permit the U.S. Navy to beef up its depot on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. In Washington, the Pentagon was busily ironing out the last wrinkles in plans to acquire new military "facilities" in Kenya, Somalia and Oman. And in Peking, Defense Secretary Harold Brown and China's Deputy Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping were exploring new, "down-to-earth" ways of countering Russian expansionism in Asia.

The assorted military maneuvering ranged from the China Sea to the Mediterranean (map), leading some to wonder

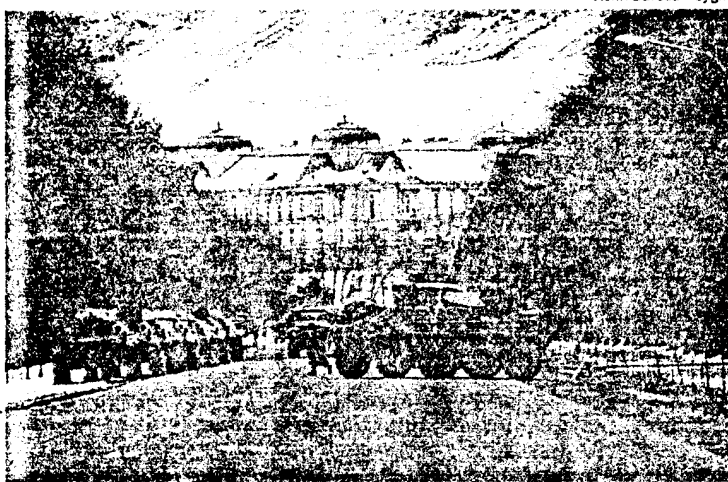
whether Carter was dusting off Truman-Eisenhower-era notions of containment. Asked about that last week, a senior Administration official refused to coin a new catchword. "I don't want to talk about drawing lines or not drawing lines," he said. But the President did seem determined to put an end to America's Vietnam self-doubts and to counter the unchecked foreign-policy adventures that have pushed the Soviet Union over the past five years from Angola to Ethiopia to Cambodia to Afghanistan. The most immediate casualty of the new get-tough strategy was Carter's once bright hope of putting arms control ahead of all the foreign-policy objectives. The sea change in Carter's world view

promised to carry him farther away from what White House hard-liners deride as "the romantics" of the State Department toward the trust-no-Russians diplomacy favored by national-security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.

SWIPES: The President's manifest intent was to encourage the Russians to think twice before adventuring any farther in Southwest Asia. Toward that end, he tightened his vise economically and diplomatically as well as militarily. In the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry nudged the Third World toward calling for the withdrawal of all foreign

The guns of Kabul: A test for grab-and-hold politics

Henri Bureau—Sygma



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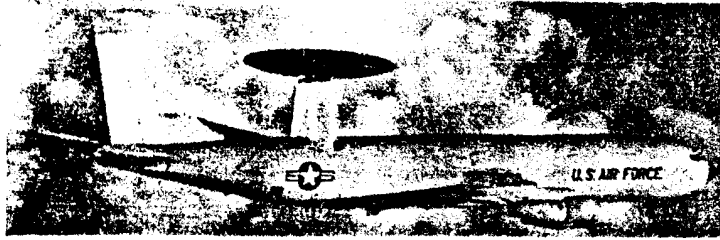
troops from Afghanistan, a symbolic gesture if nothing else. In a second swipe at Soviet *amour-propre*, Carter encouraged speculation that the U.S. might boycott the Summer Olympics in Moscow, or try to move the Games to another country. He extended his trade embargo to all agricultural produce, not just grain; he suspended all licenses for technology exports pending a review of U.S.-Soviet relations. And his men let it be known that in the future he would favor more "Executive flexibility" in the use of the CIA for covert operations.

The sanctions were tentative; the President left the machinery of détente in place, if not in use. He also left himself the option of stepping up the

the support of U.S. allies and in part on whether U.S. farmers, businessmen and politicians would stay the course. Politicking in Iowa, Sen. Edward Kennedy complained that the embargo would "hurt the farmer and the taxpayer more than the Soviet transgressors." U.S. allies in Western Europe were not eager to beard the

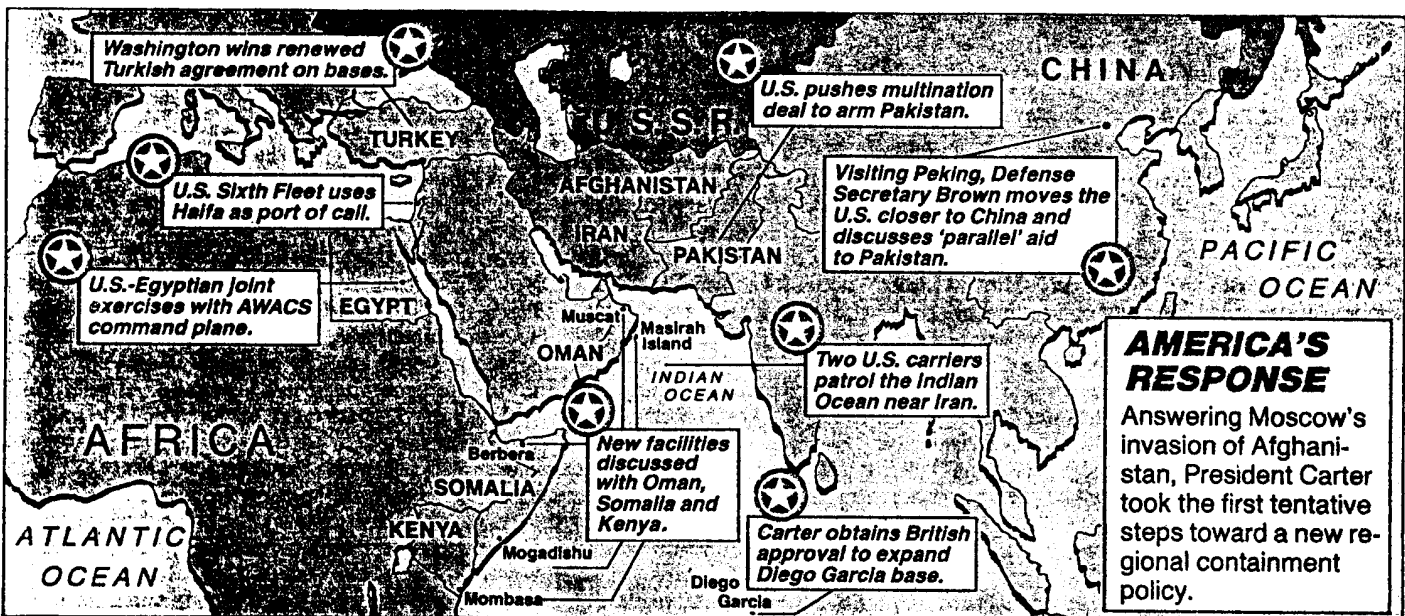
Russians. But a Gallup poll suggested that six in ten Americans believed Carter was handling himself well. And it seemed likely that the new course he was setting would shape U.S.-Soviet relations for the rest of his Administration—and perhaps for the rest of the decade.

The President's impulse to check Soviet expansion was based on a strain of American mistrust running back to the end of World War II. The Russians, Winston Churchill once told U.S. Navy Secretary James V. Forrestal, "will try every door in the house, enter all the rooms which are not locked, and when they come to one that is barred, if they are unsuccessful in breaking through



U.S. Air Force

The unfriendly skies of AWACS: Keeping an eye on the Persian Gulf



15 Ohlsson—Newsweek

Along the Soviet Union's southern periphery, a series of U.S. military moves: Coping with some worst-case scenarios

pressure if Soviet behavior grew significantly worse. Still, Tass dismissed his campaign as "a hopeless undertaking" bound "to flop"; and the Russians showed no inclination to budge from consolidating their grip on Afghanistan (page 34). Soviet Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky also threatened to veto a U.S. resolution calling for U.N. sanctions against Iran, and the U.S. hostages remained imprisoned in Teheran (page 36). But for all the show of Russian defiance, the evidence suggested that leaders in the Politburo had underestimated Third World anger over the Afghanistan invasion—and Carter's own resolve. "They feel they have gained more than they lost," said one candid Soviet source in Moscow. "But they lost more than they expected."

A NEW COURSE: The President's long-range gamble was that his sanctions would work a change in the Kremlin's thinking—if the embargo lasted long enough. That depended in part on the state of the Soviet economy and the whims of the Politburo, in part on

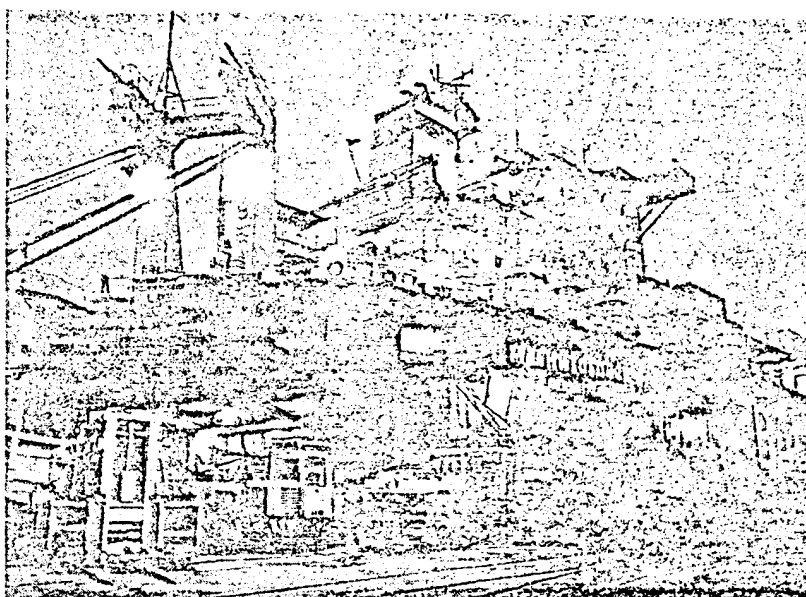


it, they will withdraw and invite you to dine genially that same evening." That sense of suspicion led to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and was borne out during the Cuban missile crisis. But as a policy, it collapsed during the late '60s. "The end of the global policy of containment came with Vietnam," says a Pentagon topsider. "The public and Congress got fed up with the war; the trouble was, they got fed up with the policy, too."

ARGUMENTS: The result, hard-liners contend, was to leave the Soviet Union unchallenged through a string of operations that ran from Czechoslovakia in 1968 to Afghanistan now. Henry Kissinger tried to slow the drift of things by demanding good behavior from Moscow in exchange for the benefits of détente: arms control, trade deals, technology sales. Rejecting "linkage," Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev

The Kitty Hawk: Flexing muscles at sea
U.S. Navy

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Coast Guard Vice Adm. Robert Scarborough maps the curb on Soviet fishing, a boycotted Russian ship in Baltimore

maintained that détente did not bar the Soviet Union from helping "progressive" governments abroad, a euphemism for crushing dissent in the Soviet bloc and fanning revolution in the Third World. Hawks now argue that with the fall of Saigon, the passing of Kissinger and the arrival of President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the last vestiges of linkage disappeared: the Soviets dispatched their Cuban surrogates to the Horn of Africa, their North Vietnamese allies to Cambodia—and their tanks to the streets of Kabul.

The problem all along has been to find a way to counter such aggressive thrusts without risking a nuclear Armageddon. The Administration was trying not to use the cold-war buzzword "containment" to describe its objectives. "The basic reality of our policy remains the same," Brzezinski insisted. But he added: "It's important to contain Moscow's expansive drives, and this has now become a more urgent issue." Brzezinski uses the word "contestation" to describe the emerging U.S.-Soviet relationship in the 1980s. The outlook for increasing strain in the years ahead contributed to the Administration's decision to increase the U.S. defense budget by an average, after-inflation 5 per cent during each of the next five years; to install a new generation of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, and to build a rapid-deployment force of 100,000 troops for quick action in flash points like the Persian Gulf.

TOUR: Even before the Afghanistan invasion, the U.S. policy of evenhandedness toward the Russians and Chinese was in tatters, but Secretary of Defense Harold Brown tilted further toward Peking last week. Brown's eight-day trip was the first visit by an American Secretary of Defense to China since the Communists took over in 1949. "If somebody told you a year ago you would be

walking through a Chinese submarine yard with a U.S. Secretary of Defense, you wouldn't have believed it," chuckled one member of Brown's party during a tour of the Wuchang boatyard in Wuhan. Brown spent hours conferring with Deputy Prime Minister Deng, Foreign Minister Huang Hua and Chairman Hua Guofeng. He toured the Great Wall; he peered into an aging tank of China's Sixth Armored Division. "Have you ever been abroad?" a member of his party asked one Chinese tank officer. "Yes—to fight in Korea," the officer replied, adding quickly, "But that is history."

The trip's main value was a symbolic warning to the Russians that the Soviet Union's eastern flank was badly exposed;

but at least one intriguing deal was closed. The U.S. agreed to sell the Chinese a ground station for the Landsat-D earth-surveillance satellite, which has tape recorders and computers that could have military applications. The Chinese quickly agreed not to put them to any such use, but the sale of advanced technology to China at a time when the lid is on with Russia could hardly be missed in Moscow. The U.S. may respond to further Russian challenges by increasing technology transfers to China. A final trump is direct arms sales. U.S. officials insisted that the subject of such sales didn't come up during the trip, but did not rule them out in the future. "They are probably only a matter of time," said one U.S. official.

At the other end of the Muslim world, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin wound up a four-day summit in Aswan as far apart as ever on autonomy for the Palestinians—but with a sense of common cause against the Soviet Union. Egypt vowed to show support for the U.S. by reducing the 300-man contingent of Russian diplomats and technicians in the country, cutting ties with Syria and Marxist South Yemen and throwing open camps to train Afghan insurgents to fight the Russians. Both Egypt and Israel publicly offered to let the U.S. use military facilities on their soil. The U.S. politely declined, in part to protect Sadat against Arab outrage and in part to avoid stirring up the Muslim world over Israel.

LEAKS: As it turned out, the U.S. had been using Egyptian facilities secretly for some time. In Washington and Jerusalem, word leaked out that Egypt and the U.S. had conducted joint air exercises last month from an air base near Luxor on the Nile. By one report—quickly denied all around—the aircraft were high-altitude American SR-71

Trojanovsky: One more veto at the U.N.

Penelope Lockridge



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SPECIAL REPORT

reconnaissance planes, overflying the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Egypt's Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Ali said the planes were American AWACS command and control jets, served by about 120 ground personnel. Crammed with sophisticated electronic scanning gear, the planes can detect fighters and ships more than 230 miles away or direct a naval blockade—handy resources if Iran deteriorates into armed conflict. Ali conceded that the exercises were “to make it easier for the air forces of the United States to cross over our skies and to land at our bases.”

DIEGO GARCIA: To make it easier to patrol the Indian Ocean, a new zone of competition with the Soviet Union, the U.S. also had plans to beef up its base on the tiny, British-owned island of Diego Garcia. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has

defense position with help from Turkey and Pakistan. With the Soviet Union flexing its muscles, and with the government in Ankara a bit weak on its legs, Turkey agreed to let the U.S. stay in 26 bases temporarily until a final understanding can be drawn up. Pakistan posed a more difficult problem. For one thing, Congress has banned military aid to the Pakistanis, who are alleged to be building a nuclear bomb; for another, a Pakistani mob killed two Americans and torched the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad seven weeks ago. To mend fences and discuss arms, Pakistan's President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq sent Agha Shahi, his foreign-policy adviser, to Washington for talks with Carter.

The U.S. President was set on pushing arms for Pakistan, and perhaps even exploring ways of funneling weapons to Afghan insurgents surreptitiously. Given the recent U.S. embarrassments in the region, Congress was more likely to countenance

way they did,” said one high-ranking U.N. officer. “It was really antediluvian, an eighteenth-century imperialist move.” The corridors and the delegates’ lounge even began rumbling with rumors that Soviet Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky had had doubts about the wisdom of the invasion.

McHenry's tactics called for keeping the U.S. in the background while the Third World carried the battle to the Soviet Union. In the Security Council, six Third World nations sponsored a resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan—without mentioning the U.S.S.R. by name. Troyanovsky called the tame measure “a flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state” and vetoed it. Mexico and the Philippines then sponsored a “Uniting for Peace” resolution—a procedural device first used to side-step a Russian veto during the Korean War. That play took the measure to the veto-proof General Assembly.

As one country after another rose at the U.N. to denounce the Russian invasion, a quiet sense of triumph settled over the American Mission. “The Russians are being shown up for what they are—aggressive, expansionist, a power Third Worlders and everyone else have to be wary of,” said an American diplomat. A West European ambassador agreed. “The Afghanistan situation may have revived nonalignment in its true sense,” he said. “Before, there was a lot of pro-Soviet nonalignment. I think Afghanistan has opened some eyes. Maybe nonalignment will become nonalignment again.”

‘WILL’: President Carter also moved ahead on a third major front—lining up U.S. allies behind his program of sanctions against the Soviet Union. He worked the phones; he twisted arms; he was encouraged by his



Bill Fitz-Patrick—the White House

Carter briefs ‘opinion leaders’ on the U.S. hostages in Teheran: Settling in for a long wait

promised Carter that the British would permit the Administration to double its military construction on the island.

Somalia, Oman and Kenya have also shown interest in granting the U.S. military facilities. None of the prospective sites was ideal. In return for the use of an old (and unfinished) Soviet base at Berbera, the Somalis will probably demand U.S. weapons, including F-15 fighters, for their border war with Soviet-backed Ethiopia. The commercial port of Mombasa in Kenya is so far from the gulf that some Pentagon officials wonder whether it's worth much. Oman, controlled by a royal family that is under leftist pressure, could turn into a miniature Iran. “All of these should be handled with some care,” cautioned one U.S. official. “The U.S. shouldn't let its press releases get ahead of its policy.”

U.S. strategists counted on shoring up the eastern and western flanks of a forward U.S.

covert operations than in the past. It seemed possible that Congress would repeal the Hughes-Ryan amendment, which has effectively blocked secret missions by requiring the CIA to report to no fewer than eight separate Congressional committees first. In recent weeks, patience has worn thin around the Hill for the long, thoughtful process of intelligence review and oversight that Carter himself advocated when he first took office.

‘ANTEDILUVIAN’: The second major component of America's get-tough strategy was a full-scale diplomatic campaign designed to persuade the Third World that the Soviet Union had shown its true colors in Afghanistan. At the U.N., U.S. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry energetically sought to portray the Russian invasion as a threat to the security of all Third World nations. He had a good deal of success. “I'm amazed that the Soviets went into Afghanistan the

first results. Canada, Australia and the European Common Market all agreed not to make up the Soviet Union's 17 million-metric-ton shortfall in grain. And when a West German reporter testily asked White House press secretary Jody Powell what might be accomplished “by destroying the American economy piece by piece,” Powell replied confidently: “The American economy and the economy of Western Europe can easily withstand the sacrifice. The situation that confronts the free world is not a question of ability—it's a question of will.”

The key question was whether the allies would choose to sell the Soviet Union the very technology that Carter had put under embargo. The main concern was that, as happened after the 1968 Czechoslovakian invasion, business would return to normal within a few months. The allies universally lent their moral support to the President's campaign. But in practice,

SPECIAL REPORT

Christopher Tyrone

Afghan demonstrators march in New York: Hoping to stop the Soviets at Kabul

Japan was not eager for a showdown with Moscow, and many Western European leaders seemed to put a higher premium upon détente than upon sanctions. France and West Germany made it clear that they would not impose sanctions on Moscow that might hurt their own economies. A top French official complained privately that his country's position "smacks of Munich." Despite their condemnation of Soviet aggression, many West Europeans did not want to force an East-West showdown on their own continent. "You cannot win in Berlin what you lost in Afghanistan," said a senior West German official.

CASKETS: Outwardly, the Soviet Union seemed optimistic about riding out any boycott. "Marxism understands capitalism better than you do," one Soviet analyst told an American acquaintance. "For most Western countries, it is more difficult to refuse to sell to us than not to; we are very good buyers." Even so, Moscow seemed surprised and puzzled by the furor over Afghanistan. For ordinary Russians, the shortage of information about the fighting provoked anxieties and hurt morale. Moscow churned with rumors of high casualties; there were reports of a shortage of metal caskets—all the available ones having been shipped to the front. "It's not like Czechoslovakia, which most people here knew about," said one troubled Soviet intellectual. "Nobody knows anything about Afghanistan. It's far away, and it's difficult to understand why Soviet boys are dying there."

The Soviets' underestimation of the

Western and Third World reaction to the invasion led some diplomats to wonder who was really in charge of Moscow. From Bonn to Washington, there was speculation that Brezhnev, 73 and ailing, had been outvoted by hard-liners within the Politburo. Experienced Kremlinologists doubted it. A believer in consensus politics, Brezhnev has always avoided putting himself out on Politburo limbs. He is a blunt, aggressive man close to the Soviet Union's own military-industrial complex, and he sponsored the move into Czechoslovakia in 1968. In Moscow, some diplomats speculated that with the Afghanistan imbroglio heating up, there might be pressure to replace Brezhnev, who can no longer work ten-hour days. U.S. strategists hoped that Carter's military and economic measures would prod a post-Brezhnev generation of Russian leaders to rethink the Brezhnev doctrine—and the politics of massive intervention.

PARANOIA: That hope may be a bit naïve. Since the time of the czars, the Russians have tried to expand beyond their borders, developing their own domino theory along the way. Client states are held at all costs. As the theory runs, an unchecked uprising in Afghanistan could invite more trouble in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, perhaps even the Ukraine and among the 30-million-plus Muslims along the Soviet Union's southern borders (following story). This traditional defensiveness, bordering on paranoia, may have prompted the Afghan invasion. A darker scenario saw the Soviets working on a grand design that would put their fighter planes within easy striking

distance of the Strait of Hormuz. While Afghanistan represented a watershed in Jimmy Carter's perceptions and foreign policy, it was probably just an extension of classic Soviet policy: grab and hold.

Carter's get-tough strategy will not change things overnight. Pessimists say the sanctions won't work at all; optimists maintain that the troubled state of the Soviet economy has given the President an advantage. The CIA now believes that Moscow's \$1 trillion economy has entered a recessionary mode with serious problems of energy and labor shortages and sluggish productivity that could last a decade. The Afghanistan expeditionary force will require the diversion of scarce transport, fuel, high-quality steel, chemicals and textiles from other uses. "The Soviets will have an increasing problem allocating their resources," predicted an East-West trade expert in Moscow. "There already are strains imposed by running two separate economies—the military and the civilian."

HOGS: The President's embargo on the feed grains and technology, limited though it was, could yet tip this already delicate balance. The Soviets appeared taken aback by the toughness of the grain embargo; the U.S. had continued to ship grain to Iran, and the Soviets believed Carter would not risk angering farmers on the eve of the Iowa caucuses. Now, for want of feed grains, the Soviets will probably have to slaughter hogs, poultry and beef, producing a long-range crisis in meat and milk production and a setback for the Politburo's standing promise to improve the country's meager diet. The embargo on oil-rig machinery also was likely to hurt, since the Soviet Union has been plagued with a marked fall-off in petroleum production.

If Carter's new get-tough strategy doesn't work, even more steely measures may lie ahead. The worst-case scenarios for Southwest Asia were unsettling: that the Soviets might cross the Afghan border into Pakistan under the pretext of chasing Afghan insurgents; that Iran might fall into civil war, inviting a Russian march into Iranian Azerbaijan; that Moscow would violate the gentleman's understanding to observe SALT II, touching off a new arms race. Given the risks, the most sensible course was to save the toughest U.S. options—restoring the draft, for example, or canceling the existing grain-sale agreement—for later. "We are not burying détente; we are not at war," said State Department spokesman Hodding Carter. "Much hinges on the future action of the Russians." If those actions don't improve, the President may eventually be forced to reconsider the kind of containment Harry Truman and Joseph Stalin understood so well.

TOM MATHEWS with FRED COLEMAN, ELEANOR CLIFT, THOMAS M. DeFRANK and KIM WILLENSON in Washington, WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT in Moscow, DAVID C. MARTIN in China and RAYMOND CARROLL at the U.N.