

# Son of 'Secret Sellout'

By William Safire

WASHINGTON, <sup>5 FEB</sup> Feb. 11 — In this space last week, some new information about the secret sellout of the Kurdish people was revealed: The United States, which had been quietly supplying arms aid to Kurdish rebels fighting for self-determination inside Communist dominated Iraq, betrayed our allies at the behest of the Shah of Iran.

When it suited the Shah to foment trouble in neighboring Iraq, he invited the U.S. to help him aid the Kurds. We secretly went along, since trouble in Iraq set back the Soviets and helped the Israelis. But when the Shah made a deal with the Arab world for oil solidarity, he drew the U.S. along into a doublecross of the Kurdish people: Last spring, when our \$16 million aid to the Kurds was cut off and the revolt was smashed, Iran forcibly returned 40,000 refugees to Iraq, and there is no telling how many were executed.

A State Department spokesman reacted to my column with a statement approved by Secretary Kissinger: "We look upon that piece as a collection of distortions and untruths unsupported by any documents or the record. Frankly, I find it too contemptuous for further comment." (The spokesman meant to say "contemptible"; it is Mr. Kissinger's attitude toward Congress that is "contemptuous.")

SK; let's look at some documents.

1 Two years ago, on March 23, 1974, Soviet Defense Minister Andrei Grechko went to Iraq to help that Soviet client make a deal with its rebellious Kurds. On the advice of Ira and the U.S., Gen. Mustafa alkarzani, the 74-year-old Kurdish leader, refused. Here is a C.I.A. memorandum of March 22, 1974—the day before Marshal Grechko arrived in Iraq—showing our policy had been to help the Kurds just enough to keep them bothersome but not enough to win "Iran, like ourselves, has seen benefit in a stalemate situation . . . in which Iraq is intrinsically weakened by the Kurds' refusal to relinquish its self-autonomy. Neither Iran nor ourselves wish to see the matter resolved one way or the other."

2 One year later, the Shah made a deal with Iraq on oil. He then cut off supplies to the Kurds, and the Iraqis attacked. On March 10, 1975, the stunned Kurds sent the following message to the C.I.A.: "Our people's fate in unprecedented danger. Complete destruction hanging over our head. No explanation for all this. We appeal you and the U.S. Government intervene according to your promises. . . ."

3. On that same day of infamy,

March 10, 1975, the C.I.A.'s chief of station in that area cabled Director of Central Intelligence Colby in Washington: "Is headquarters in touch with Kissinger's office in this; if U.S.G. does not handle this situation deftly in a way which will avoid giving the Kurds the impression that we are abandoning them they are likely to go public. Iran's action has not only shattered their political hopes; it endangers lives of thousands."

4. Again on that fateful March 10, 1975, while Secretary Kissinger was shuttling about the Mideast, Kurdish General Barzani sent him this letter: "Our hearts bleed to see that an immediate byproduct of their agreement [between Iran and Iraq] is the destruction of our defenseless people in an

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unprecedented manner as Iran closed its border and stopped help to us completely and while Iraq began the biggest offensive they have ever launched. . . . We feel, Your Excellency, that the United States has a moral and political responsibility towards our people who have committed themselves to your country's policy. . . . Mr. Secretary, we are anxiously awaiting your quick response. . . ."

5. Twelve days later, on March 22, 1975, the Director of Central Intelligence received this cable from his chief of station: "No reply has been received from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to the message from Barzani. . . . If the U.S.G. intends to take steps to avert a massacre it must intercede with Iran promptly."

6. One day later, Secretary Kissinger—furious at the Israelis for their "intransigence"—suspended his shuttle diplomacy and flew home. The Kurds, whose revolt had long been tying down the Iraqi Army, were crushed in a few weeks. On April 10, the C.I.A. chief of station cabled Director Colby: "Only a few Kurdish leaders knew that until recently they had our secret support for their military resistance because it diverted Iraq from Israel. If senior Americans like Kissinger . . . do nothing to help the Kurds in their present extremity, we may be sure that they will not lie down quietly to be buried without telling their story to the world. . . ."

Now the documents that tell the story of American dishonor are finally leaking. Henry Kissinger—whom President Ford, if elected, is determined to continue in office for four more years—has coolly dismissed the Ford Administration's betrayal of an ally with a line classic in its amorality:

"Covert action should not be confused with missionary work."