

The election eye . . .

Hansen scores strong gains in Iranian trade

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Whatever happens in the Iranian crisis, Rep. George V. Hansen, R-Idaho, has without doubt solidified himself with the voters of the Second Congressional District with his dramatic trip to Iran.

Unless some gross detrimental situation should develop later, Hansen looks politically unbeatable at this time. He held a distinct advantage beforehand, but appeared to have eroded some support by his irresponsible threat to impeach the president and for other emotional and negative outbursts.

Much of these are now relegated to the background by his courageous and daring trip to Tehran. His astonishing achievement to become the first American to visit and talk to some of the hostages in the American Embassy brought him worldwide recognition.

Some have commented that it was a grandstand play, but Hansen has taken such unheralded trips before although not with the spectacular success he achieved with this one in Iran.

Some of his remarks — such as those castigating the shah, may be playing into the hands of the Iranians and against this country's policy — have come under attack by the Carter Administration.

His remarks on the junkets were in Panama, Bolivia, Nicaragua and other countries which were hardly expected to have such impact he said. He said that although they were not his fault.

Hansen's political risk is to his credit. He has taken a risk vs

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of campaign financial troubles, but beat Kress handily in 1978.

But the senatorial toga has always eluded the ambitious Hansen.

He surrendered the House seat in 1968 to oppose Sen. Frank Church, but could only garner 40 percent of the vote.

He tried again in 1972 when Sen. Len F. Jordan retired but this time, then First District Congressman James A. McClure, won the primary, in a field of five with Hansen a fairly strong second. His bitter charges against McClure that his big business supporters stole the election chilled relations between the two to this day.

Although Hansen has done well in raising campaign contributions from devoted followers, he still has a staggering personal debt, the amount of which he refuses to divulge. He has never denied that it surpasses \$400,000.

Hansen claims bitterly these debts resulted from what he called "dirty tricks," defending himself against charges of illegal campaign reporting which brought him \$2,000 court fines, although he escaped a jail term.

He also was accused of late income tax filing but he showed where he had got an extension and paid the tax. His charges

against the IRS of Mormon discrimination and harassment against such small income payers as waitresses failed to be substantiated but they did make good copy during the 1978 campaign.

Hansen, much like Church, is one who commands strong feelings, either for or against. There appears no middle ground, such as in the case of McClure.

Interfering in the diplomatic field and derogatory statements against the shah, however, could have a disastrous effect on this nation's delicate Iranian negotiations. It caused White House press secretary Jody Powell to state the Carter administration is opposed to Hansen's personal mission to Iran, believing it may prolong the holding of the 49 hostages still held.

Hansen accomplished his purpose and held attention of the nation and international press. Further inflammatory statements on the situation by Hansen could undo much of the good he has accomplished.

He has won wide world publicity and handled himself well in national and international interviews. Even NBC called this writer to get a background on the energetic congressman.