

Graham sees overthrow of Khomeini in Iraq-Iran war

Sun Oct 5, 1980

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, now retired, arriving in Idaho Falls for the start of a South Idaho tour aimed against the re-election effort of U.S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, said Friday he sees the eventual overthrow of the Iranian ruler, Ayatollah Khomeini, as result of the present Iraq-Iranian war.

Not only that, he believes the entire situation is "fraught with immense hazard," with the possibility of the dismemberment of large chunks of Iranian soil annexed by Iraq and Soviet Russia.

The entire Middle East is a tinder box with Kuwait to the south likely to become an Iraq vassal, and the Soviets establishing a corridor that will give them a railhead and access to the Indian Ocean, long a dream of theirs.

Graham, who resigned in anger when President Ford fired James Schlesinger as secretary of the Department of Defense, is now representing the American Security Council in its crusade against those it feels are harming America's military capabilities.

One of the prime targets is U.S. Sen. Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Graham, for 33 years in the armed service and a West Point graduate, scheduled appearances this weekend in Idaho Falls, Blackfoot, Pocatello, Burley and Twin Falls to carry his crusade against Church's re-election bid.

"This situation," said the fiery Graham in referring to the Middle East war, "is simply a fallout from our idiotic foreign policies in that part of the world by President Carter, ably assisted by Church."

"The fact is that first of all we didn't do anything to prevent collapse of the Shah (the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi). Then when we saw the collapse coming there was a possibility for the military to take over."

Instead, said Graham, the U.S. sent four star Air Force Gen. Hyser with instructions to tell the Iranian military that if it took over, this nation would stop sending military supplies.

"Eventually," said Graham, "the ayatollah came into power and then the American hostages were taken."

This policy, said Graham, also was a large factor that encouraged the USSR to invade Afghanistan.

The Iraq-Iran conflict dates back 50 years, and even longer, and Iraq launched its war when it felt the Iranians were weakened by internal conflicts, Graham added.

Graham, who said he has visited Iran frequently while in intelligence with the U.S. military, explained the present border dispute carries many perils of vital importance to this nation.

He sharply faulted the present administration for what he said "was failure to prevent destabilization of the area."

The Iraqis are doing much better militarily, said Graham, adding "the Iranians for all their bravado are not able to kick them out."

Graham said it would now appear that Iraq Premier Hussein will control the rich oil-bearing area of Kuzestan in the southernmost part, and perhaps occupy other key Iranian oil fields.

Graham dismissed the present shelling and counter shelling as "destructive but not militarily effective."

With the failure of Khomeini to eject the Iraqis, Graham said the ayatollah probably will be over-

thrown in the next month.

Asked about the hostages, Graham said, "They may be freed or in the process they may be slaughtered. This could be a dangerous situation."

Asked what course this nation should follow, Graham said there is none at present except neutrality but this nation should ask its Western allies and Japan to join in confining the present conflagration.

"We just don't have the power to do much else," said Graham.

He said if there is an attempt to halt the flow of Persian Gulf oil to the Western powers, the situation will become increasingly dangerous.

Graham said he foresees the dismemberment of Iran with the Soviets annexing Azerbaizhin in the northwest and Baluchistan on the far eastern border that will give them the corridor to the Indian Ocean.

Graham observed Kuwait will fall an easy prey to Iraq as it has no army but only a small police force.

The retired general said he would immediately

redeploy the Second Airborne Division from Fort Bragg to large bases in the Sinai desert being abandoned by Israel.

"This is the most dangerous situation since the Cuban missile crisis," said Graham.

Graham, who is employed by the American Security Council, bitterly attacked the present Carter policies, and blamed Church as a prime supporter for weakening this nation's military capabilities.

He noted the American Security Council rated Church's 10-year voting record at only 5 percent and zero for 1980 while Sen. James McClure gets a rating of 100 percent for both 10-year average and in 1980. Republican Congressmen George Hansen gets 100 percent for 1980 and 97 percent for 10 years while Steve Symms is ranked at 100 percent for both 1980 and all the time he has served in Congress.

Graham, who has been in Idaho on at least two occasions with the main purpose of sniping at Church's military appropriation voting record, is former director of defense in the intelligence, and deputy director of CIA. He took early retirement at 51 on Jan. 1, 1976, over the Schlesinger firing.