

Iran crisis is worst in U.S. history—professor

By Skip Volkmann

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union have reached a crisis point, said Professor Charles Gati of Columbia University and Union College in New York, in a Friday speech in the Nebraska Union. The crisis, precipitated by the Soviet Union's what Gati called "opportunistic" invasion of Afghanistan, is the third since World War II.

It is certainly the most dangerous crisis, Gati said, because America is reacting to the Soviet challenge and the Iranian crisis like an indecisive, declining world power. The Soviet Union, however, is militarily better equipped than in past crises and is confident that it has nothing to fear from the United States, he said.

The other two crisis confrontations between the superpowers were the Berlin Airlift in 1948-49 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. In both crises, Gati said, Soviet action was met by firm and decisive American resolution and superior American military might.

"The Soviet reaction to the humiliation (of the Cuban Missile Crisis) has been pragmatic. They started, on one hand, detente, primarily interested in trade, but also good relations," he said.

Unparalleled buildup

"On the other hand, they began a massive military buildup unparalleled in history. The Soviet Union has spent 12 percent to 15 percent of its gross national product on military hardware preparing for the possibility

that a (third) confrontation might happen," Gati stated. "In which case, it will not have to give in as it had done in Berlin and Cuba. This is why the current crisis is potentially far more dangerous," he said.

In addition to achieving equal strength in both conventional and nuclear weapons, Gati said the Soviet Union has stabilized its position in world affairs. The government enjoys the overwhelming support of the Soviet people. It has increased its influence in the Third World using its Cuban "proxies," he said.

Soviet economic growth has been between 3 and 5 percent annually, "quite good, quite steady," and there relatively few problems in Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe during the '70s, Gati said.

"Historians will say that the '70s was the decade when the Soviet Union made great steps forward," Gati said.

American decline

He contrasted the rise of Soviet influence and stability with the "decline" of the United States during the '60s and '70s.

"There was the U.S. preoccupation with Vietnam and the post-Vietnam lethargy. We experienced division perhaps unparalleled in U.S. history, especially in foreign policy questions.

"We have lost confidence in our leaders. We are skeptical of their motives—often rightly so—and Congress has assumed a foreign policy-making role that is irrelevant to the era in which we live," he added.

The CIA is no longer a useful agency in the making of

foreign policy, Gati said. And the United States is having problems with its economy and its allies. Of particular concern to Gati is that the United States is no longer a leader in technological advancement, having been eclipsed by England, West Germany, Switzerland, and Japan. Referring to the unsuccessful attempt to rescue the Iranian hostages, he questioned U.S. helicopter technology.

Former laboratory

"It is no longer the 1950s when the United States was the social, economic and technological laboratory of the world. This is what we were, not what we are now," Gati said.

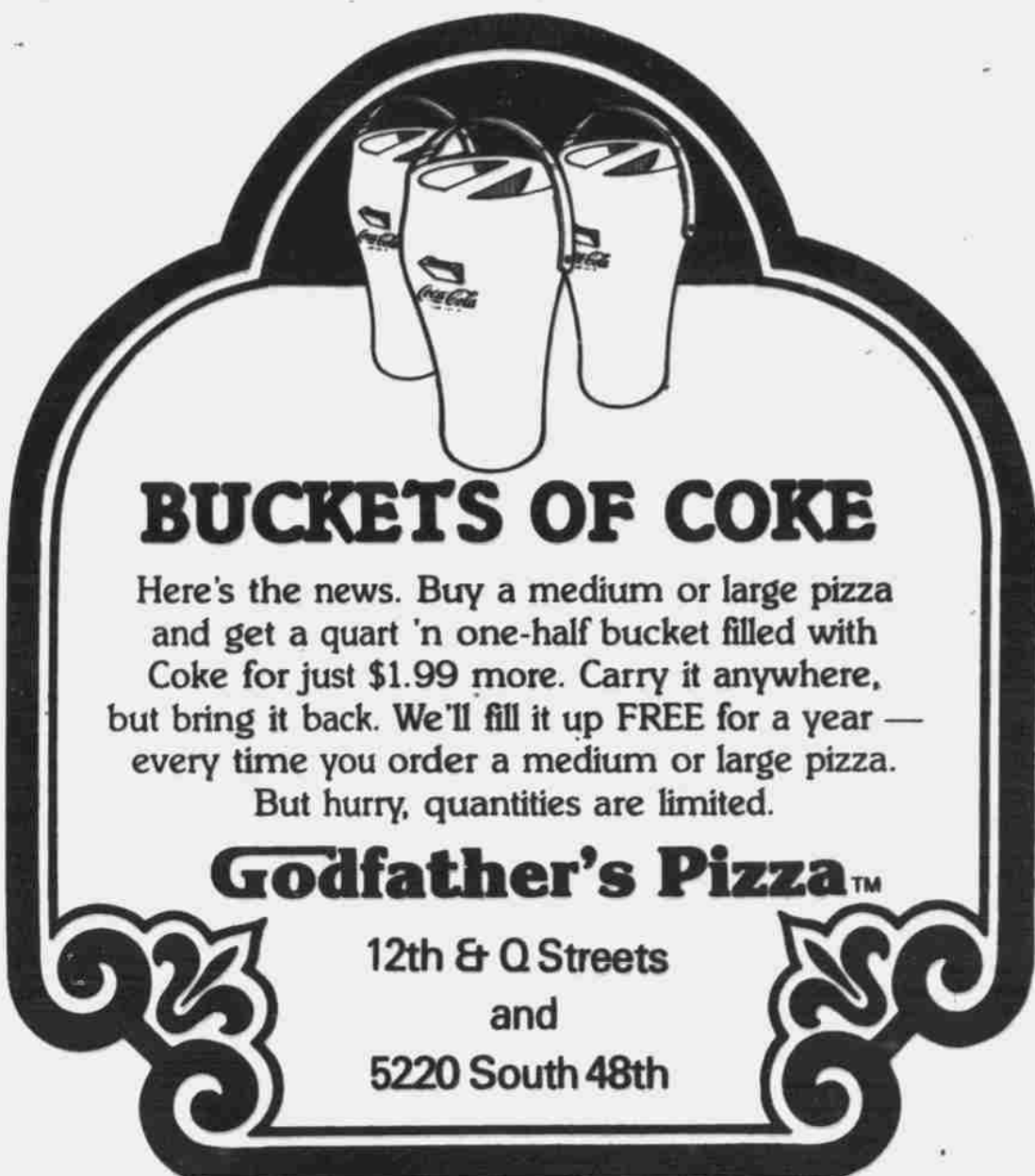
Gati sees the U.S. response to the Iranian crisis as the of a transitional, slowly declining world power, the characteristic of which is the "deferment of choice." "The problem is, we have not gone as far on the peaceful path as we could have, nor have we taken the military path because we can't make up our minds," he said.

"We go step by step, incrementally, watching the polls. And neither policy works. It's a guarantee of failure to pursue two policies at the same time.

"As a result, we choose the worst option," he said, "an embargo. An embargo has never worked. It will only turn Iran to the Soviet Union to pick up the tab, as it is already doing."

Although he said he does not think the Carter administration is handling the Iran crisis well, Gati said the other presidential candidates don't offer easily judgeable foreign policy.

He said that Bush has the most experience, while Kennedy offers little in the area of foreign policy, and Reagan may not be as "hard-line" as he says. Anderson has character possibly suited to handling foreign affairs, Gati said.



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Nebraska Union Board Proposed Bylaw Change

CURRENT:

"This committee shall consist of Board members, Program Council members, representatives of organizations served by CAP, and a CAP office staff member."

PROPOSED CHANGE:

"This committee will invite each Program Council to provide a representative to serve as a committee member."

The intent of this proposed change is to restructure Programs and Activities Committee.

Proposed amendment is posted in Nebraska Union and East Union.

To be considered May 21,
at the Nebraska Union Board
meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Need a loan? Better apply for it now

Students needing federally guaranteed student loans for summer and fall should apply for them now, the financial aids office director said.

"The processing time for guaranteed student loans has not speeded up as much as we thought it might," Don Aripoli said. "Therefore the time to process a guaranteed student loan is about eight to 12 weeks.

Aripoli said that although UNL completes application forms three days after they are received, the guaranteeing agency takes longer to process forms because of the number of places the forms must be sent.

"Students who want loans for the pre-session and have not yet applied for them have virtually no chance of getting the money while they are still enrolled," he said. "We will still take these applications and process them, but the students should not count on the money being there."

Aripoli said the financial aids office has adjusted for the longer processing time.

"To make things more convenient for the students, we are taking applications for guaranteed loans starting May 5 instead of June 1," he said. This would enable students to turn in their application forms before they go home, Aripoli added.

Aripoli said most delays in receiving guaranteed student loans are caused by student error.

Aripoli said students should type their applications to reduce errors and illegibility.

He said he was not aware of any delays in the processing of Basic Educational Opportunity Grants.

"It normally takes four to six weeks to process a grant," he said.

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