

April 29, 1980

THE CARTER/BRZEZINSKI-ORDERED IMPERIALIST INTRUSION INTO IRAN --
AND WHAT ABOUT KHOUMEINI/BANI-SADR'S "HOLY WAR" AGAINST THE LEFT?

Dear Friends:

By no accident whatever a real live mad Colonel, the Apocalypse Now type -- Green Beret Colonel Beckwith, trained in the decade-long U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam -- was chosen to command the "Blue Light" elite corps to descend upon Iran in the dark of the night of April 24. It is impossible to conceive such a totally bungled military operation on the part of the most technologically-advanced behemoth as the U.S., that had undergone a 173-day long plan, UNLESS the Planner had himself decided to abort the operation for reasons having nothing whatever to do with either the advanced military technology or American lives. Here was a gory mission that had gone through 30 rehearsals, stretched over a period of nearly six months, involving six C-130 Hercules transport planes, which had proven their technological proficiency in the decade-long bloody Vietnam War, with eight equally proficient Sikorsky RH-53 helicopters, all manned by a volunteer, gung ho military outfit, armed not only with weapons but canisters filled with disabling gas, which, after only three hours in the desert, with no enemy in sight, suddenly falls apart. First, three helicopters malfunction; then, comes the order from the Commander-in-Chief to abandon the mission. It is now 2:15 AM of April 25. The fiasco departure becomes a tragedy as the transport plane and helicopter collide and eight American bodies go up in flames. The Green Beret Colonel orders the rest of the crew into a plane without either picking up the bodies, or destroying the secret documents. Five others seriously burned are taken aboard. It is now 4 AM.

I repeat, it is impossible to conceive such a total failure unless the reasons behind the order to abort the operation had nothing whatever to do with either the technology or the lives of the American hostages that were supposed to have been rescued. Two probabilities surely make more logic than the official accounting. One is that the CIA is still cooperating with SAVAK and this actual

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Fifth Column in Iran got cold feet at the last minute and did not wish to carry through with their mercenary murderous job.

Or, even more likely, the President got cold feet through both the strong opposition he would meet from the American public and the distrust he suddenly felt for the CIA-sponsored Fifth Column. But whether these probabilities or the officially-proffered explanation of sheer technological failure motivated the abortion of the mission, this born-again-Christian President, Brzezinski-inspired or otherwise, has not for a single moment hesitated from risking the ultimate -- the possibility of a world holocaust.

Even so bourgeois a specialist on military defense as Drew Middleton* felt compelled to show how the risk of a naval blockade "would increase if Soviet tankers were sent to test the blockade." Indeed, even before a global confrontation, there certainly would be -- and there were -- protests of the U.S. presence in the Gulf region from such sturdy allies of the U.S. as Saudi Arabia. As for the West Europeans, not only do they oppose military steps at this time but they are hesitating even about serious economic sanctions. And who exactly takes the Congress seriously as any sort of calming hand just because the head of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Frank Church, talks about the President "flouting" the War Powers Resolution? Capitalism has never failed to have enough loopholes in any "limitation" to the war powers of its Commander-in-Chief to allow him a free hand.

Whether or not President Carter is so Nixon-bent on the retention of his powers in this election year that even the prospect of unleashing World War III cannot stay his hand, it is a fact that the Iranian misadventure can in no way be separated from Carter's internal drive for war that he had begun long before. The point is that Carter's proposal for reinstating draft-registration for the youth has, indeed, a global imperialist outlook.

It becomes imperative, therefore, that our struggle against Carter's drive for war is at the same time a way to express our solidarity with the Iranian masses in their anti-imperialist struggle. In doing so we must make sure that the struggle for freedom does not get separated from a philosophy of liberation. And therein, precisely, lies the deep contradiction in the Iranian revolution, signified all over again by the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr unleashing of the unholy "Holy War" against the Left that Khomeini/Bani-Sadr have just initiated.

* See Drew Middleton's "Risk for the U.S. Grows in Iran", New York Times, April 27, 1980, which includes also a section on the growing tension between Iraq and Iran.

II

Nothing was more ghoulish than the hanging judge Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali's display of the burned corpses of the eight American soldiers. Did he intend to put them on trial? And why, exactly, were those corpses given to Khalkhali after Bani-Sadr had announced they would be returned to the U.S. without any conditions? Did such an inhuman act as Khalkhali's require a world outcry before the Revolutionary Council double-tongued its retraction of Khalkhali's dehumanized statements? What is as disorienting a matter as that calculated display is the statement of the supposed moderate Bani-Sadr and the Imam Khomeini which maligned the Iranian Left as having a connection with Carter's imperialist venture. What Khomeini-Bani Sadr-Ghothzadeh-Behesti-Khalkhali have unleashed is a move against the very forces that were in the forefront of the revolutionary overthrow of the Shah.

Not only is there no connection between the deep unrest in Iran and Carter's intrusion into Iran (and Bani-Sadr knows it), but the ruling clique in Iran has shown an affinity to the rulers in any capitalist country when they took advantage of the desert fiasco to hit out against the Left, against the dissatisfaction over the great mass unemployment, against the national liberation movements, Kurds especially, who have attempted to deepen the Iranian revolution from mere overthrow of the Shah to actual freedom and new human relations. Khomeini and Bani-Sadr know that the opposition to them began with their retrenchment from the goals of the revolution, whether that related to Khomeini's trying to turn the clock back on Women's Liberation, or trying to abolish the shoras of the workers. Isn't it a fact that the attempt to railroad through the Constitution coincided with the takeover of the Embassy, in the first place? And isn't it a fact that even the election of Bani-Sadr as President is now again diluted while the clergy gets back into its hierarchical rule in the Parliament? And how, exactly, do you help the "truth" when Iraq, too, is called an "accomplice of American imperialism"?

The truth is that the great unrest in the country, the masses' desire for new, non-exploitative relations, the national minorities' passion for self-determination are so inseparable from a great passion for philosophy of liberation that there isn't a single expression -- and there are no less than 150 different groups attempting to articulate that passion for freedom, in every form from pamphlets, books, papers, leaflets, ^{to} cassottos that does not at once get grabbed up on the university campuses. It is these bookstalls that so frighten Khomeini and the so-called Revolutionary Council that they order their goons to attack the

student youth. Worse than the riots these goons instigated -- and there were many injured and some dead -- is the state-and-clergy-sponsored edicts for the abolition of political activity. Khomeini is under the illusion that, since the Left does not command sacrosanct mosques such as they used in the struggle against the Shah, the idea of freedom will die. Bani-Sadr followed up the slanders against the Left by concocting another version, charging that the unrest on the campus is only "part" of some global imperialist plan: "Now I have some proof and I hope to give it soon to the Iranian and foreign people that they will know that the arrival of the American planes was just part of the plan." All he gives "proof" of is that most unfinished state of the Iranian revolution. What the masses will prove is that they have no intention whatever to let the revolution remain unfinished.

III

The strangest toleration of all, if not outright "love", is the one that exists between Khomeini and Tudeh. Anyone in the West is so accustomed to the 180 degree turns, hypocrisies and outright alliances of absolute opposites on the part of the Russian Communists ever since the Hitler-Stalin Pact, which gave the green light to World War II, that none in the West were surprised by the Secretary General of the Iranian Communist Party, Nurreddin Kianuri's declaration that they are "followers of Imam Khomeini's line."

When interviewed by an editor of Le Monde, Eric Rouleau*, on the question of supporting terrorism, Kianuri replied: "Of course we condemn terrorism, but no principle can be eternal. From the very beginning we supported the arrest of the so-called diplomats because they were engaged not only in espionage ... but in counter-revolutionary and subversive activity." As for continuing incarceration of the American hostages, which flow in the face of international law, and which Russia also had to condemn, Kianuri let the cat out of the bag by approving the status quo of continuing the retention of the hostages when he said that it "was a good way of preventing the normalization of Iran's relations with the U.S."

It isn't true, however, that either the clerics who were with Mossadegh in the '50s or Mossadegh's secular followers are that tolerant of the Tudeh Party. Tudeh's miserable role in that period has not been forgotten and the invasion of Afghanistan has made some worry over the new "populist" phase of the Communists who did receive 100,000 votes in Teheran alone in the first round of the elections.

*The Guardian, April 27, 1980 (Le Monde English Section)

The Tudeh, on the other hand, both in its publication, Mardom, and in the speeches that Kianuri makes, feels perfectly free to criticize Bani-Sadr and Ghotzbadch while leaving Khomeini free from criticism, as if Khomeini wasn't anti-Communist. And yet, truth to tell, Kianuri does have a point. Khomeini's anti-Communism is so abstractly religious, that is to say out of the context of existing Communism as a world nuclear power, so single-minded in his opposition to Carter alone as being "the Great Satan" that he wasn't diverted seriously by Russia's invasion of Afghanistan; Bani-Sadr and Ghotzbadch are more aware of realities, and know that there are two nuclear world powers, each after single world control.

(which is only anti-America).
A greater measure of the narrowness of Khomeini's "anti-imperialism" and toleration of the Tudeh Party, while being totally opposed to genuine Marxists, is seen in the commander of the Revolutionary Guards which have the full support of Khomeini. Their commander, Abu Sharif, spelled out the danger for Iran: "The danger comes from U.S. leftist organizations." He expanded it thus: "There are U.S. leftist organizations which are arming themselves such as the Fedeyi Khalq. There are other leftist organizations like the Tudeh Party, which says it recognizes the Islamic Revolution's constitution and Imam Khomeini's line. In this case, it is a legal leftist organization that acts and works on this basis. But the danger comes from the U.S. leftist organizations, which receive funds and weapons from the West and falsely speak about a Russian threat to Iran to justify military relations with the United States." (MERIP REPORTS, March/April 1980)

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As against Kianuri's goal -- "the breaking off of all remaining ties with the U.S." -- and as against Sharif saying that "the danger comes from U.S. leftist organizations", what becomes imperative is the forging of relations, revolutionary relations, between the masses in the U.S. and in Iran. To prevent the real danger of a world holocaust, it is necessary to see that the enemy is not so much abroad as at home. It is here where philosophy of revolution becomes as crucial as social revolution itself. Ideas of freedom recognize no national boundaries. It is a fact that our rulers are our enemies and that the Iranian masses are our friends. The world revolution may not be on the agenda at this very moment, but it's that vision of a new world that is the ground for the actual struggle that will prevent nuclear holocaust by creating a new world on totally human foundations.

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