

FACING FACTS IN IRAN

Last Friday, President Carter came very close to pushing the U.S. over the edge into a war in the Middle East. Many people think that Carter's rescue mission, while ending in failure, was an heroic action. But this military adventure shocked the world by its indifference to growing world tensions and its reckless flirtation with war.

It angered the families of many of the hostages, as they watched the same president who once prayed for the captive Americans' lives, now willing to gamble those lives on a bid to boost his ratings in the presidential polls. It shook the NATO alliance. It hardened anti-U.S. feelings in the Arab nations and throughout the Third World. And, according to a *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow, it left many Soviet officials privately laughing up their sleeves at the injury done to the U.S. political position in the Middle East and Western Europe.

No doubt about it: the U.S. government's conflict with Iran plays right into the Russian leaders' hands. When the U.S. forced economic sanctions, the Soviets and Eastern Bloc countries rushed in to fill the vacuum left by western trade. The effects of military action would be even worse. While our country got tied down in a new "Vietnam," the Soviets would come forward as the friends of the Iranian people. Already, Russian troops move south to Russia's border with Iran while 110,00 Soviets continue to occupy Afghanistan to the east. In Vietnam, Cuba, and Angola, the pattern's the same: the Soviet expansionists have found no better waters to fish in than the waters troubled by U.S. aggression.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF OPPRESSION

While feelings surrounding the hostage crisis run high, we need to take another look at what we're really fighting about -- and how our differences can best be resolved. In the heat of the national furor over the hostages, let's not forget that our government provoked the crisis in the first place. Ignoring clear and repeated warnings from Iran, our president extended an open welcome to one of the most hated tyrants of modern times.

If many U.S. people feel personally affronted by the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, we must consider what a slap in the face Carter's welcome to the Shah was for the people of Iran. If U.S. pride has been offended, we must weigh this against all that has come to light about the long history of

U.S. involvement and subversion in Iran: How the CIA masterminded the coup that put the Shah into power in order to return control of Iranian oil to the western oil companies. How senior agents in the CIA taught torture techniques to Iran's 30,000 member secret police force, SAVAK. How the Shah and the U.S. multinational companies raked in billions from their convenient partnership, while the people of Iran lost control of their national wealth and were deprived of the most basic political liberties.

Even after the overthrow of the Shah, the U.S. government continued its subversive activities inside Iran. On January 3, 1979, the Carter Administration sent an Air Force General to plot the overthrow of the Iranian government and attempt to crush the Iranian revolution. And now, Carter's rescue attempt points to almost certain continued U.S. subversion in the building up of a secret army inside Iran. The Iranian people have good reason to suspect U.S. espionage and intrigue in their national affairs.

Before we see ourselves committed to war over the hostage stalemate -- in a move which would lead to the hostages' sure death -- we should recall these last twenty five years of U.S. government involvement and intrigue in Iran. We should ask what we are risking world war for: Should the U.S. people go to war to defend the honor of the oil corporations, to hide the ugly history of U.S. corporate profiteering in Iran, and to once again deliver the oilfields to Mobil and Exxon? Is military action the only way to resolve the crisis and settle our differences in Iran?

No. There is one choice that the U.S. government has never seriously considered even though it has been the solution held out by the Iranian people: Open up the books on the past. People from every part of the world have encouraged us to make it our business to come forward with an explanation for U.S. involvement in the Shah's regime.

There has been alot of talk about national pride around the events in Iran. But we have nothing to be proud of in the U.S. government's support for the Shah for twenty five years. The U.S. people *can* take pride in our willingness to stand up to the truth, to say when the U.S. government has been wrong in the past, and to unite with the legitimate aspirations of the people everywhere in the world today.

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