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Soviets March into Afghanistan Quicksand

On the first day of the 1980s, 10,000 Afghan and Iranian demonstrators marched on the Soviet embassy in Tehran to protest the recent invasion by the Soviet Union into Afghanistan, as well as its installation of a new puppet regime. Shouting "Down with Social Imperialism," they tore up the Russian flag, while a number of the demonstrators attempted to storm the embassy walls. From there, the demonstration proceeded to the former U.S. embassy, adding "Down with U.S. Imperialism" to the chants. At the same time, the Soviet flag was burned at a demonstration of 5,000 at the Russian consulate in Mahshad, Iran, near the Afghan border. The next day, the Afghanistan embassies in both West Germany and New Delhi, India, were taken over by Afghan students and held for a number of hours.

While the Soviet Union has been trying to blame its armed invasion on "imperialist interference" in Afghanistan's internal affairs, the U.S., expressing laughable indignation at the Soviet Union's "naked aggression," has been using the opportunity to rattle its own war sabres and tighten up its bloc in preparation for their use. Events in Afghanistan are clearly taking shape in the international (and regional) context of the sharpening contention between the U.S. and USSR. And while these events may prove to be a qualitative leap in this sharpening contention, there is an element to the general picture that, wish as they may, neither imperialist superpower can ignore. The actions of the masses in Central and South Asia, including within Afghanistan itself, are showing the people have other plans than to be used as pawns in the inter-imperialist rivalry for world domination.

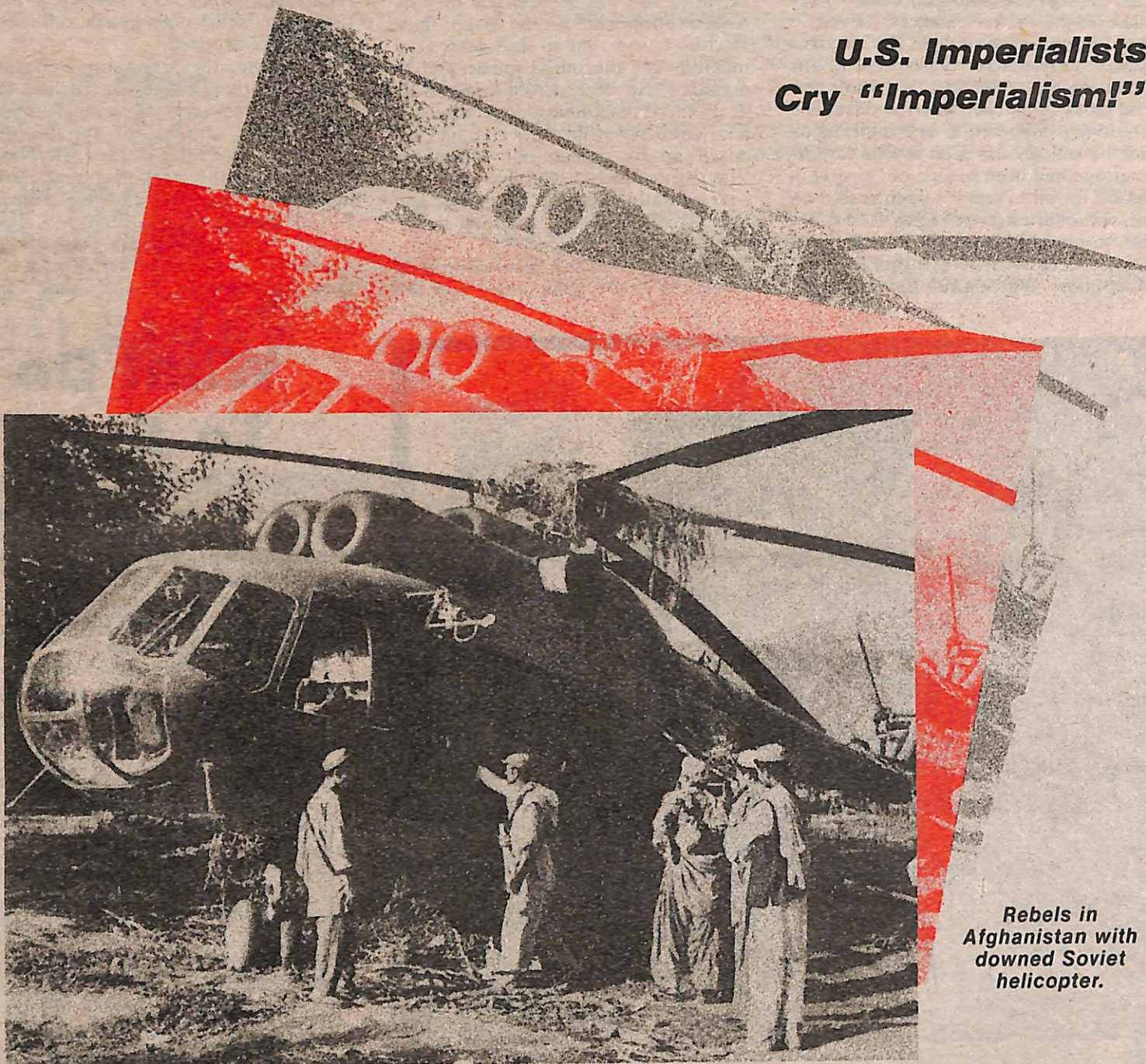
"Stabilization"—Soviet Style

Actually, the Soviet Union's increasing difficulty in "stabilizing" its own domination of Afghanistan is what has led it to send some 30,000 to 50,000 troops (so far) into that country, and to replace one puppet regime with a new one. The past year has seen a number of mass uprisings against the Afghan regime and the Soviet masters, including in the major cities Harat and Jalalabad in the east. In addition, rebel guerrilla forces have been battering the Soviet puppet troops especially hard in recent months, and their ranks and areas of control have been swelling. At least one province, Kunar in the east, was reported to be totally under rebel control, and most of the rest of the country's 28 provinces have been the scene of fierce fighting, with the guerrilla forces basically controlling the areas at night. In fact, armed convoys travelling from Kandahar, 400 kilometers south of the capital, to Kabul, normally a seven-hour drive, have taken 3 days to arrive after being ambushed by two or three different guerrilla groups along the way.

This situation has led to big problems within the Afghanistan puppet army.

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**U.S. Imperialists
Cry "Imperialism!"**



Rebels in Afghanistan with downed Soviet helicopter.

Bob Avakian Case Appealed Gov't Fires Up Railroad Again

Late last week the U.S. government fired up the engine of its legal railroad of Bob Avakian and the Mao Tsetung Defendants. On Thursday, December 27th, the U.S. Attorney's office filed an appeal with the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The appeal stems from the lower court ruling on November 14th dismissing the 25 felony counts against Comrade Avakian and the 16 other defendants. The legal grounds of the dismissal were "prosecutorial vindictiveness" when the prosecution added charges increasing the defendants' possible jail time from 100 to 241 years when they combined two sets of defendants. The underlying fact was that the government had been forced to temporarily retreat in this case, due to the strength of thousands of people who had been mobilized to oppose the attack and the potential strength of many thousands more throughout society stepping forward in opposition to the government and its attack.

Still, the government did not change a bit as far as their determination to nail Bob Avakian is concerned. While they were plotting and maneuvering for a comeback on the legal front, they have unleashed their attack on various other fronts—in particular sending out the Secret Service agents to wage a secret war against Bob Avakian (See RW No. 32). By filing their appeal, the government has stepped up and raised their attack to a still higher political level. They have further shown their blood-thirst by rushing to file their appeal a month or more ahead of deadline.

In the past the government has gone to great lengths to cover up the political nature of their attack as well as the focus of this railroad in a thick fog of "just another criminal case." In the appeal, this disguise is reduced to the petty little cover of changing the name on the case from the U.S.A. v. Robert Avakian et al to the U.S.A. v. Nina K. Schiller (another defendant) et al. But this just about ends the coverup because

after that the political nature and focus of this attack is run practically straight out in the open.

On the very first page of the appeal, the prosecution puts it straight to the Appeals Court—this is a political trial and these are the terms, "the charges all grew out of an incident on January 29, 1979, when the defendants, armed with a variety of weapons and objects, attacked police lines in front of the White House while protesting the visit of Premier Teng Hsiao-ping of the People's Republic of China to the United States." In a footnote they add, "The defendants were part of a group which five days earlier had identified itself as the Revolutionary Communist Party Committee for a Fitting Welcome." And in the very next sentence they lay out the cornerstone of the renewed case, "... the defendants had acted premeditatedly and in concert in committing the assault." Here you get it practically straight out:

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Afghanistan

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Even with the presence of 3,000 Soviet military advisors, as well as jet bombers, tanks, and helicopter gunships, all supplied by the Soviet Union, the government has not been able to hold the army together in the face of the continuing popular movement. Because of losses in battle, desertions, and in many cases, outright defection to the liberation struggle, the Afghan army has been reduced from its original size of about 100,000 men down to about 60,000, despite the fact that the government recently lowered the draft age to 14-year-olds in some rural areas to try to swell its ranks.

In November, Hafizullah Amin, who had come to power only two months before in a coup against the previous Soviet puppet, Nur Mohammed Taraki, attempted to launch a general offensive against the liberation forces. While he had some initial success in one province, mainly due to the presence of Soviet helicopter gunships flown by Soviet pilots, the rebels in most of the country beat back the attacks and began to take the offensive themselves, initiating hit and run battles within 60 kilometers of Kabul. Apparently, this was the final straw for the Soviets. Having airlifted about 4,500 troops into Afghanistan, the Soviets announced on December 27th that Amin had been executed and that Babarak Karmal was to be the new head of the Afghan government.

Karmal is the head of the Parcham (Banner) faction of the so-called People's Democratic Party, the Soviet-style revisionist party in Afghanistan, while Amin, and Taraki before him, had been the leaders of the Khalq (People's) faction of the same party. The two factions have united and split apart 14 times in the 14 years that the party has been in existence, with the main difference between them being which faction would get to be the chief Soviet bootlicker in

the country. They united most recently in the April 1978 Soviet-sponsored coup that overthrew the Daoud regime, which had been getting too friendly with the U.S., and brought Taraki to power. At first, Karmal was named the Deputy Prime Minister of the government but Taraki quickly appointed him ambassador to Czechoslovakia as part of a move to get all the Parcham leaders out of the country and consolidate the Khalq faction's power. When Taraki later tried to get Karmal back to Afghanistan after a purge of the Parcham faction, Karmal went into hiding somewhere inside the Soviet bloc to await his master's call, should he be needed. Apparently, the Soviets are hoping that Karmal and his faction will be less exposed than the Khalq group, and that he will be able to make some sort of a deal with at least some of the opposition forces in Afghanistan, and broaden the Kabul government's base of support.

But clearly they are not relying on this latest change in puppets to stop the struggle of the masses. Immediately after the announcement of the coup, the Soviet Union rapidly airlifted more tanks and troops into the Kabul airport to consolidate their hold, and beat back those Afghan army divisions that were reluctant to go along with the latest Soviet maneuver. And Karmal called on other Soviet puppets, from Cuba to Angola, to also send military help. The Soviets have also moved two armored divisions into the country, possibly to secure the major airfields in preparation for a combined air-ground Soviet military offensive against the guerrilla forces, similar to the "pacification" program attempted by the U.S. in Vietnam. Given the determined and resolute struggle of the Afghani people for their freedom, the Soviet attempt at "pacification" will undoubtedly meet the same fate at the hands of the masses.

War Mongers Scream "War Mongers"

For its part, the U.S. government's

response to the Soviet invasion and coup has had two aspects. The first has been to express shock and outrage that their adversary imperialists are just as bloodthirsty as they are. President Carter, complaining that Brezhnev had lied to him about the Soviet invasion, decried the lack of honor among thieves in a nationally televised interview with "newsman" Frank Reynolds, ABC-TV's chief hand-wringer over the declining forces of U.S. imperialism. The State Department expressed the hope that the world, including Iran, would note the difference between the "aggression" of the Soviets and the "restraint" of the U.S. in Iran, failing to mention the fact that it has been the united action of the Iranian masses that has so far prevented the U.S. from taking the military action that it has consistently threatened.

But more than the public opinion maneuvers, the U.S. has used the occasion to make a number of moves to tighten up its war bloc in preparation for a future showdown with the Soviets. Warren Christopher, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, was quickly dispatched to a NATO meeting to discuss various options. While this included the possi-

bility of boycotting the Olympic games scheduled for Moscow this summer, more to the point was State Department discussions of the possibility of resuming direct arms shipments to Pakistan. This country, which borders Afghanistan on the east, had previously been cut off due to its insistence on developing nuclear weapons. The State Department also mentioned the possibility of arms shipments to China. In addition, they held out the possibility of initiating direct military support for those few Afghani groups based in Pakistan that the CIA deems trustworthy, such as the so-called Afghan National Liberation Front, whose sole desire is to replace the Soviet puppet regime with themselves on the end of the U.S.'s string.

But the maneuverings of the superpowers in the Persian Gulf area are not taking place in a vacuum. Although they are each fond of pointing to the other as the war monger (and on this point, they are *both* right!), and claiming that the people have to choose which superpower they like best, the masses of people in Iran and Afghanistan are showing their determination to be free of both. ■

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