



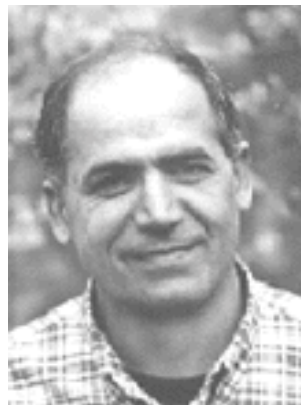
‘The basis of socialism is the human being... Socialism is the movement to restore human being’s conscious will.’

- Mansoor Hekmat

The great Marxist thinker and leader of the Worker-communist Party and worker-communist movement, 1951-2002

On the Pretext of Opposing the USA, don't bring Islamists to the Streets of Europe!

Asqar Karimi



Since September last year, extensive protests against NATO and the USA's militarism and warmongering have taken shape in many cities across Europe and

the world. Hundreds of thousands wanting a better, more just and free life for all humanity have come to the streets to declare their opposition to this warmongering and the killings and bombings of innocent people in various countries. Amidst all this, however, reactionary and misogynist Islamic groups, some of which officially support the Taliban and Islamic terrorist groups and states are taking advantage of the decent sentiments of freedom-loving people. People who have come onto the streets to stop NATO and Bush's bombings and defend the deprived people of the region, suddenly see themselves next to the most reactionary and backward Islamic

groups shouting slogans against the USA with the slogan Allah-o-Akbar, which is a reminder of the innumerable people in Iran, Algeria and Afghanistan who have been murdered by political Islam. European supporters of Islamic groups in the anti-war movement can be found in every country amongst the isolated, marginal so-called left groups that are sects irrelevant to people's lives. These are the groups that supported Khomeini under the pretext that he was an anti-imperialist; support Hamas because the Palestinian people are suppressed by the ruling fascism in Israel; and support any reactionaries be-

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Question: The Worker-communist Party of Iran has stated that the USA war against Iraq must be stopped and that any USA military attack on Iraq is condemned. How would you explain the difference between the USA attack on Iraq and its attack on the Taliban; how do you explain the different positions of the WPI vis-à-vis the two USA attacks?

Koorosh Modaresi: It is not a question of war; it is obviously a

On the USA Attack on Iraq

Interview with **Koorosh Modaresi** on the USA's New Global Strategy

question of a USA attack on Iraq. The attack that the USA is preparing for is different from the USA-Taliban war. The USA attack on Iraq is the continuation, or better stated, expansion of the policy the USA was pursuing during the Gulf War, i.e. the imposition of a New World Order, which will guarantee complete USA domination. The Afghanistan war was a war by the USA and a coalition of many countries across the world to overthrow the Taliban, one of the centres of political Islam in the region. In that war, the downfall of the Taliban and political Islam was both beneficial for the people of Afghanistan and positive for the people of the region and the world. In that framework, whoever was to replace the Taliban would reduce the suffer-

ing of the people of Afghanistan and weaken political Islam in the region. The war that the USA is preparing for today, however, is a completely different issue. The downfall of Saddam Hussein and possibly the Ba'ath regime will not be the only result of this attack. Before anything else, this war will secure USA domination, a seriously harmful phenomenon for the people of Iraq, region and world, and will negatively impact on people's progressive movement throughout the world.

This war must be looked at from two angles that are certainly related to each other. One is the issue at hand itself that the USA poses and the other is the more general strategy that its bourgeoisie's extreme right is putting forth as a framework

for US foreign policy in today's world.

The USA has presented the issue as one of overthrowing a dictatorial, fascist and criminal regime. This is not the issue at hand, however; it is the hue and cry that the USA has raised in order to cover up the real issue. We have previously spoken extensively on this, i.e. bringing up the characteristics of the Ba'ath regime, which was incidentally supported by the USA during most of its tenure, in connection to the Gulf war and economic sanctions on Iraq. Readers can refer to Mansoor Hekmat's articles about the Gulf War and my interview in the 'Porsesh' journal.

In brief, I must say that the issue

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of Afghanistan had a real and actual foundation, which separates it from other parts of the world - political Islam's domination and the expansion of its terrorist base. On Iraq, however, the issue raised is arbitrary and as such cannot reflect reality, i.e. the issue that the USA is raising in this war is not particular to the Iraqi government; the majority of USA friendly states are such. By separating Iraq, we give the judging of who is criminal and despotic to the USA. Let me give some examples: They argue that the Iraqi regime is despotic. But are the regimes of Saudi Arabia and other US allies less despotic than the Iraqi regime? By accepting this, we are consenting that the USA determines the despotic nature of regimes. They argue that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. But doesn't the USA, UK, Pakistan, India, Israel, France, China, etc. have the same weapons? If we accept this, then we accept that owning weapons of mass destruction is a crime only if the USA thinks it is. They contend that Iraq has used these weapons. But isn't the USA the only state that actually used nuclear weapons in the world? Were not the defenceless people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims of this? What about the people of Vietnam? Did the USA have any doubts on using chemical and biological weapons against the people of Vietnam? Wasn't the USA and West supporting Iraq exactly when it used chemical weapons, including against us? Didn't they ignore and silence the protests and objections raised by us and the people of Iran and Iraq who were victims of Saddam? Was it not the USA that used depleted uranium in the very same Gulf War? Haven't hundreds of thousands of children, young and old become victims of this, according to the UN; has not the USA used the most horrific weapon of mass destruction, i.e. economic sanctions, for more than ten years against the people of Iraq? The truth is that the issue at hand is not having or using weapons of mass destruction; if we ac-

cept this from the USA, then we have officially accepted that the use of weapons of mass destruction is a prerogative of a small number of countries and their permission to use it is given by the USA and its friends.

There is only one fact in light of the hue and cry that the USA has raised. The USA can overthrow anyone that it determines to be contrary to its interest. Today the 'change of regime' is aimed at the fascist regime of Iraq. With this same reasoning, if this is established, then tomorrow, the USA can remove any regime or system it considers contrary to its interest under the slogan of 'regime change'. A 'regime change' in Iraq is most certainly the demand of any decent human being but in reality this is not the issue at hand for the USA. Raising this is merely a propaganda war to secure a special role for the USA.

The second angle that must be considered, and which I believe is the main pillar of explaining USA policy, is the debate about the new USA strategy in the contemporary world, i.e. the New World Order. We are witnessing a fundamental change in the philosophy of the USA's international policy. Up until now, even at the height of Reaganism, the official USA international policy was that the USA must be so powerful militarily so as to deter the enemy, particularly the Eastern Bloc, from militarily attacking the US and use this to defend its political, economic and military domain. This policy was called the 'Deterrence Policy'. Today, however, we are witnessing the pronouncement of a new policy by the extreme right of the US bourgeoisie called the Pre-emptive Strike Policy. The White House has recently announced this as the basis of USA foreign policy. According to this policy, the USA must not allow the shaping of any competitor, be it economic, political or military, that can ignore or threaten USA interests; the USA must be able to suppress the shaping of such a power by use of military force.

Adopting this policy does not require United Nation or any other state's backing, but rather requires that the USA act unilaterally by relying on its own power and independently of others. This is the basis of the USA policy towards Iraq. Upon establishing this policy, from tomorrow, people anywhere who demand certain freedoms that threaten USA interests will face the military might of this state. By adopting this policy, the USA is turning the world into its own backyard. It is doing what it has done over the past century in Latin America - coup d'etats, military interventions, and maintaining states that guarantee USA interests. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Israel are contemporary examples in the Middle East.

We must also, however, take into account the human dimensions of this adventurism in USA policy. Economically speaking, Iraq is a much more complicated country than Afghanistan. Attacking Iraq will again mean the destruction of its economic foundations, from its electricity grids and water networks to bridges, roads, etc., examples of which we saw in the Gulf War. One pillar of the USA war against Iraq will be the destruction of its infrastructure and economic basis. Also, the USA has shown that it is willing to kill thousands of innocent people to prevent even one casualty on its side. Furthermore, this time, the Iraqi regime will be dragged into a war of life and death. Does anyone have any doubts about the brutality of the Iraqi regime? Can anyone guarantee that Iraq will not use chemical or biological weapons? If it does, what will happen? In the last war, Iraq was officially warned that if it uses chemical weapons, nuclear bombs would be used against Baghdad. In this case, the regime is facing its overthrow and no retreat has been left for it, therefore, the possibility of its using chemical weapons is more probable and real; what would they do then? Would they not bomb Baghdad with a nuclear bomb? Do they have any moral di-

lemma with this? Did they not do it in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Vietnam? By attacking Iraq, the USA will begin a war of lunatics! The people of Iraq will be the first victims of this war. The USA-made government, which is to replace the Iraqi regime, is an interesting one - a collection of tribal leaders and generals who should be in tried next to Ba'ath leaders, Islamists who have been one pillar of political Islam in the region, and so on. The war hasn't even started and Jalal Talebani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Masud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party are talking and planning the ethnic cleansing of Karkuk.

The result of the arbitrary separation of Iraq from other reactionary states and alongside the brutal incursions of the Israeli state will be the expansion of political Islam in the region. Islamists will once again have an audience for their bleak propaganda. This policy will give them legitimacy. It will encourage fascism vis-à-vis fascism. The 'Pre-emptive Policy' will be used against regimes unacceptable to the USA and not against despotic regimes. In its opposition, this policy will promote various kinds of corrupt and foul ideologies such as political Islam and nationalism. In a single sentence, the outcome of the USA attack against Iraq will be nothing but deprivation and corruption. Do not forget that the formation and development of Al-Qaeda was the result of the first Gulf War, which defined itself in reaction to it. This time however more foul groups will come to the fore.

Question: It might be argued that the Iraqi regime, like the Taliban regime, is corrupt, dictatorial and fascist and that its downfall is the desire of all decent people. Why couldn't one be pleased, then, at the USA attack on Iraq and see a positive side to this war, like the war with the Taliban?

Koorosh Modaresi: Certainly, the downfall of the Iraqi regime is the desire of all decent people. The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI) alongside the Worker Com-

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unist Party of Iraq has struggled against the Iraqi regime; this battle continues. However, the issue at hand in this attack is not the overthrow of the Iraqi regime; this is the USA's formula on the issue. Saddam Hussein's regime can also be overthrown by dropping a nuclear bomb on Baghdad; must we see a positive side to it? The USA was striving to establish its supremacy in the war on Afghanistan too but the issue at hand there was the overthrow of the rule of political Islam, which with limited casualties and destruction, could guarantee the coming to power of a regime that was nonetheless better. The outcome of the Taliban's defeat was not the USA's triumph as the uni-power of the world, whatever the USA's formula for that war. The result of that victory in Afghanistan from the viewpoint of the world's people was the defeat of political Islam and the triumph of some form of civilisation over Islamic barbarity. In fact, it is for this very reason that the USA has returned to the issue of Saddam. The Afghanistan war did not and could not, because of the nature of the issue, establish the position and law of the jungle the USA wanted. On this occasion though, the outcome of the USA war on Iraq will not be the overthrow of Saddam, but rather the establishment of the USA's domination on the world. This phenomenon will be worse for humanity and the people of Iraq than the Iraqi Ba'ath regime. I think that one must move beyond the formula the USA presents to the world with the aid of lackey journalism and declare that the issue at hand is something else. The USA's attack on Iraq is to establish the USA's supremacy. If there was a civilised and human regime engaged in overthrowing Saddam, then the question would have been fundamentally different. As I said before, we should not accept the account they have placed before us at face value. The issue is something else. It is not the case that we must overthrow Saddam at the expense of devastating the lives of

the people of the region, world, including the people of Iraq.

Question: What factors can stop the USA attack on Iraq and what is to be done? What is the WPI's position on the 'anti-war movement', which is taking shape and the groups involved in it? Will the WPI take part in this movement?

Koorosh Modaresi: The actualisation of the USA attack on Iraq depends on various factors, including establishing strategic and logistical facilities in the region and neutralising European countries to accept the USA's new role. One significant and fundamental factor, however, is the protests which can and must be organised internationally against USA militarism. If the USA and Western states face the surge of people's protests, then they will be forced to retreat; consequently, we will strive to constitute a significant pillar of the anti-war movement. In reality, however, this movement attracts various groups to it. As I said before, the outcome of the USA's militaristic policy will be to strengthen political Islam and nationalism. In the process of the shaping of the anti-war movement, this means that these groups will try to present themselves as the representatives and voices of the interests of the people of Iraq and the region, turn their own slogans and perspectives into the perspectives and slogans of the movement's participants and also draw legitimisation from this movement. We must not allow this to happen. This movement must be the movement of the civilised world and humanity against USA barbarity. Its demands must not have any sympathy with Islamists and nationalists. We must enlighten, mobilise, gather sympathy and turn humanity into the banner of this protest. This is a complex struggle but in reality the civilised world and humanity is with us, particularly after September 11. We must use this opportunity. We must utilize this movement as the basis of the emergence of humanity's movement against USA militarism.

Question: What are the main

slogans in the context of the activities of the Worker-communist Party of Iran against the probable USA attack on Iraq and what is the WPI position, in particular, on the slogan of 'Neither Bush, Nor Saddam'?

Koorosh Modaresi: Undoubtedly, one slogan cannot capture all this analysis and reality. More than focusing on one slogan, attention must be paid to declarations, resolutions, debating the issue in one's locality and the process of the formation of this movement. As far as the 'Neither Bush, Nor Saddam' slogan is concerned, I think that this slogan accepts part of the USA's account. Clearly, the slogan's elements are not only fine but they express the desires of any decent person. In the current situation, however, placing the two together implies that there is a war between Saddam and the USA and we are saying 'no' to both of them. This is not the case. As I have said, there is no war but an unjustified USA attack on Iraq. The issue at hand is the USA not Iraq and not Iraq plus the USA. If our movement fails to be clearly against USA militarism and begins from a defensive position, it will not succeed. If someone asks my position on Saddam, my reply will be that the issue at hand is not Saddam. I will not accept this deception. You cannot paint a frog in the colour of a canary and then debate the principles of conduct towards canaries with me. The situation is exactly like the Gulf War. Then, too, we did not accept that the issue at hand was Kuwait and its independence.

Question: In the event of a USA attack on Iraq and the presence of USA forces in the region, the region's political geography will be altered and will affect the political situation in Iran as well as the political forces in opposition. What is your analysis of this change in the region and Iran?

Koorosh Modaresi: If the USA attacks and succeeds, then it will become a country residing in the region. Today, if the USA wants to use military force against anyone

in the region it must first seek the agreement of several countries, sheikhdoms and emirates. By having a permanent base in an Iraq it has seized, the USA will be placed in a more established position, allowing it to do anything it wants. This is not a bright future. Neither we nor the people of Iran want to go to war with the USA. However, the USA has shown, and today with its 'Pre-emptive Strikes' policy has declared, that if the people of Iran, Saudi Arabia or any other place in the region decide to adopt a policy which is not to the liking of the USA or if any state in any of these countries comes to power that might, by its economic development, limit USA influence, the USA will simply occupy their oil producing regions or devastate the entire country by using its permanent military base. With this policy, the USA is turning the Gulf region into its own backyard. If we have learnt lessons from the past and present, this is a gloomy future for the region. The USA will become the cause of instability and the growth of reactionary groups in the region in the same way that Sharon was the cause of the growth of Hamas in Palestine.

Politically, the presence of the USA next to Iran is not beneficial for the Islamic Republic and will strengthen groups supportive of the USA. As I said regarding Iraq, we are not for 'weakening' the Islamic by at the expense of the people's devastation. One can overthrow the Islamic regime by dropping an atomic bomb on Tehran. This USA policy will bring nothing but devastation for the people.

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cause they are from the Third World and under the yoke of imperialism. In any issue regarding the Middle East, they always support the most reactionary political trends in the region. They have joined together and the end product is the emergence of these Islamic groups and parties on the streets of London, Stockholm, Los Angeles and Toronto.

Political Islam, however, is itself part of the problem of the people of Iran, Palestine, Algeria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. One end of this movement is in Europe, imposing Islamic schools on children, confining women in homes and placing the universality of children and women's rights with the help of fatwas by Friday prayer mullahs and the occasional honour killing under question. The other end of this movement is in Iran, Afghanistan and Algeria, stabbing unveiled women, denying children fun, laughter, swimming, dancing and socialising with their school friends, murdering thousands upon thousands of communists and progressives, issuing fatwas to murder this or that person and suppressing workers' strikes. This movement doesn't want the people's freedom and prosperity nor does it belong in any way to freedom-loving humanity. It does not represent the people of Iraq, Palestine, Algeria, Iran and

Afghanistan. This movement is itself the problem of hundreds of millions of people in the Middle East and North Africa. It is part of this era's fascism and has killed countless people for being freethinkers, socialists, women, Jewish and for protesting and going on strikes. Labelling them as the people's representative is the biggest insult to hundreds of millions of people who are bravely striving to get rid of these oppressive and reactionary states and groups. Merely shouting anti-American slogans is not an indication of progressiveness. Khomeini, Ben Laden, Mullah Omar, Saddam Hussein, leaders of Hamas and Al-Muhajiroun are all against the USA. The litmus test of progressiveness is the clear and candid defence of progressive, secular, equalitarian and welfare demands of the people of the region. The litmus test is to rise against USA and NATO terrorism and simultaneously join the millions of progressive men and women in the region to get rid of these murderous and criminal Islamic states and groups.

There is a full scale and extensive battle taking place in the Middle East. Civilised humanity cannot see USA warmongering and remain indifferent to this massive and popular battle. This is a battle which, on the one side stands the reactionary, murderous,

misogynous and anti-freedom Islamic groups and on the other hundreds of millions of progressive men and women, a powerful secular movement and a popular mass movement for prosperity, equality and a modern life. On the one side, stands right-wing, despotic and criminal states with the likes of Khamenei, Khatami, Saddam, Musharraf and Arab reactionary sheikhs as the most revolting and reactionary representatives of capitalism who have incidentally always been backed by reactionary Western states and particularly the USA. On the other side stands hundreds of millions of deprived and freedom-loving people. The people want neither Saddam nor NATO and USA bombs. They want neither the murderous Islamic groups and states nor the economic sanctions against the children and deprived people of Iraq. They want neither NATO's aerial bombardment nor the suicide bombings of Islamic terrorists. They don't want execution, stoning, compulsory veiling, prison and torture. Those who bring the Islamic reactionary groups onto the streets in Europe and the USA and invite the leaders of these groups and the Imams of mosques to give speeches officially and undoubtedly belong to the camp of reaction. They are strengthening the ranks of political

Islam vis-à-vis secularists, progressives and the women's liberation movement. By giving the anti-war movement an Islamic gloss, they are blemishing and undermining this movement and making decent people reluctant to take part in it. This is the biggest service to Bush and Blair's policies. Progressiveness demands that civilised humanity raises the banner of freedom, secularism and the political rights of the people of the region and isolates political Islam and its supporters in the anti-war movement. The yardstick for progressiveness is the clear and direct defence of the progressive, secular, egalitarian and the welfare issues of the people of the region. This at the same time will help strengthen the anti-war movement. The more progressive, socialist and humanitarian groups have the upper hand in these protests, the more this movement will have a humane and more legitimate face and will garner the support of hundreds of millions of people who have been suppressed by political Islam in the region.

We must strongly condemn the bullying of the USA, Britain and its allies but we must not allow reactionary and backward Islamic groups the opportunity to emerge in the anti-war movement.

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World Order

US War in the Middle East

By **Mansoor Hekmat**

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