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International | Anti-War**The Great Divide- Iran and Leftists**

by Gary Sudborough

Saturday Jun 27th, 2009 1:27 PM

A discussion of the great divergence of opinion among leftists about the situation in Iran

There seems to be a great divergence of opinion among liberals and leftists about what is really happening in Iran. There are those who think Iran is in somewhat of a vacuum and is only trying to have a democratic election against theocracy and a repressive attitude to women's rights. Other leftists think because the Bush administration in the past had contemplated military action and also covert actions by the CIA against Iran that these facts, among others, argue for an attempted coup taking place, especially given the enormous number of successful and unsuccessful CIA coups which have occurred in the past 60 years. I have an excellent book entitled Killing Hope-US military and CIA interventions since World War 2. I would say that the only countries or continents not to have at least CIA spies in them would be places like Greenland or Antarctica that have little interest for multinational corporations because they are covered with huge ice sheets. Of course, this could change with global warming. You might be served a burger and fries by an Eskimo at the grand opening of McDonalds in Greenland.

Noam Chomsky seems to want to take a middle ground and say that no elections in the US or Iran are really democratic because in the United States only the very wealthy get to choose those candidates who are to run and in Iran it is the clerics who decide the question. He is correct, of course, but that does not solve the problem of whether the CIA and US covert actions are being used in Iran.

Norman Solomon, a leftist writer for Common Dreams and other publications, had an article titled "Full Spectrum Idiocy- the GOP and Hugo Chavez." One of the points of his article is that anyone who thinks like Hugo Chavez and suspects a CIA-instigated attempt to overthrow the Iranian government is an idiot. This is somewhat belligerent. When I wrote my article about Iran entitled: "Iran- Amnesia, Ignorance or Stupidity," and gave my reasons why I suspected CIA involvement in Iran, I at least didn't call those with differing ideas idiots, but gave them three choices, all of which are better than idiot. Hugo Chavez has already suffered one CIA -backed coup in April 2002 in which a portion of the Venezuelan military arrested him, imprisoned him on a military base and installed a Chamber of Commerce man named Pedro Carmona as President of Venezuela. Pro-Chavez supporters in the thousands stormed the Presidential Palace, removed Pedro Carmona and in a while Hugo Chavez was released from military custody, during which he said two uniformed military men from the United States took part. Is Hugo Chavez an idiot or paranoid for suspecting that CIA coups have been perpetrated or are presently taking place in other countries, having experienced one himself? I think he is being perfectly rational, especially since Ahmadinejad is a man like himself in certain respects. Both Ahmadinejad and Hugo Chavez are spending the profits from the sale of oil to improve the lives of the poor in their respective countries. The ruling class of the United States hate this situation. They would rather have the rich in power in other countries so that American corporations can move in, privatize the oil and all other corporations, privatize health care and any benefits like Social Security for the poor and establish sweatshops with no recognition of worker's rights, unions, safety regulations in the workplace or product quality and safety. In other words, they want what Michael Parenti calls a client state government. I call it a puppet government. As Michael Parenti has said: "There is only one thing the rich have always wanted and that is everything."

I have discovered a very interesting thing about Venezuela. The CIA is still organizing coups against Hugo Chavez. The Cato Institute, a right wing think tank in the United States, recently paid an



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anti-Chavez student organizer a half a million dollars to stir up trouble against Chavez. It is called the Milton Friedman Award, but let's get real. This is nothing more than a bribe to help overthrow a democratically elected government. The student's name is Yon Goicoechea. I couldn't get a break in remembering this name by having him called Juan Gonzalez or some other easy name. If I had accepted money from a foreign government, let us say the Soviet Union when it was in existence, to overthrow the government of the United States, I would be classed as a traitor and either executed or would be spending a lot of time behind bars, probably in solitary confinement. However, Yon Goicoechea is now in Mexico from certain reports and probably spending his half an million dollars and enjoying himself immensely. Is Hugo Chavez an idiot for thinking that perhaps Iranian students, like Venezuelan students in Venezuela, are being paid money by US institutions to foment revolution in Iran? I think not and believe the real idiot to be Norman Solomon.

Another very prominent leftist in the United States is Michael Moore. He is a man who has done great work with movies like Roger and Me, Fahrenheit 9-11, and Sicko, with a new movie coming out in October on all the thefts and frauds committed by the banks and financial institutions of the United States that have contributed to the present world-wide depression. I give him enormous credit for at least keeping track of the carnage in Iraq and Afghanistan and posting on his web site the news of the latest US drone strikes that have killed numerous civilians in Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, he is another who sees the situation in Iran in isolation and thinks it is all about democracy. Michael Moore has long been a union man and I believe it was his father or another relative who was involved in the famous sit down strike at General Motors in the 1930s. I, too, have long held a passionate affinity for unions. Some of the earliest books I read were about the IWW in the United States and their heroes like Joe Hill, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Big Bill Haywood. I am just speculating here, but I think one of the things which swayed Michael's opinion on Iran was that the bus drivers union came out in support of the protesters and threatened a strike. The real tragedy here is that unions in other countries have often been infiltrated by the CIA. In Latin America there was an organization called The American Institute for Free Labor Development. It was ostensibly run by the AFL-CIO, but was funded almost exclusively by the Agency for International Development and was an instrument of the CIA. One of its missions was to teach the unions in Latin America to be virulently anti-communist and to help with strikes any coups that the CIA was organizing in Latin America. Consequently, it is a big mistake to think that unions are always on the moral, just and democratic side of an issue.

One of the greatest problems that I perceive confuses many Americans, including many leftists, is a separation in their brain between domestic and foreign events. Most Americans realize the effects of capitalism at home. After all, in just the last 30 years there have been the scandals of the sub prime mortgage swindle by the banks, the Enron debacle where some people in California actually lost their lives due to planned blackouts, the accounting crimes of Arthur Andersen and others, which caused stocks to be greatly overvalued and led to a stock market crash and finally to the great savings and loan theft, which cost every American family approximately 5,000 dollars to remedy. They, also, realize that a great deal of their tax money is going to the very rich people who robbed them in the first place. The amazing thing is that these same Americans often believe that their foreign policy is motivated by humanitarian and democratic concerns, instead of the greed and avarice they experience at home. They point to the humanitarian aid given to other countries. Incidentally, much of this so-called humanitarian aid is actually money to build the roads and ports so that American corporations can make even more profit by not having to pay for these expenses. What American aid there is in terms of food, medicine and other things which are truly humanitarian is very miserly, especially since the demise of the Soviet Union, when there was obviously a competition between the countries. Now, US humanitarian aid is near the bottom in terms of that aid given by the other industrialized countries. Americans, also, point to the Marshall plan to rebuild Europe. That was obviously meant to prevent all the countries of western Europe from going communist because most of the resistance movements against German fascism in those countries were lead by communists. Finally, there is the American fascination with the "good war." I am speaking of World War 2, when American forces actually did fight on the right side against German and Japanese fascism. They relate that to other wars and think the United States is always correct when it decides to intervene in other countries.

Finally, let us return to the question of why if domestic policy in the United States is determined by very wealthy capitalists, why that same greed and desire for profits and power should not also extend to foreign countries? Those who own a country also control the repressive apparatus of the

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state. In other words, the police, army and the national security apparatus are in the control of the capitalists. If one doubts this fact, look at the history of Europe. Weren't nearly all the wars caused by the territorial and monetary aspirations of the rich nobles and kings? Does one notice any massive demonstrations by the poor for a war which does not benefit them in the least.

Consequently, if the ruling class of the United States control the armed forces would they not use that army to satisfy the same hunger for wealth and power which they exhibit at home? I believe the answer is an emphatic yes, and all those leftists who believe the United States is not involved in the least in Iran are dead wrong.

Going to very popular leftist web sites and finding myself seemingly all alone in this opinion, I was very despairing that people who understood capitalism could not understand its consequences, namely imperialism. Now, I see that Paul Craig Roberts, Phil Wilayto, James Petras and others have joined me in my opinion. Michael Parenti once called the CIA, "Capitalism's International Army," and I couldn't express the situation any better.

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