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Khomeini: "We Shall Confront the World with Our Ideology"

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# Documents

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## Khomeini: "We shall confront the world with our ideology."

*The following speech, written by Ayatollah Khomeini on the eve of the Iranian New Year, is his most comprehensive summary of his political philosophy and world outlook. Here Khomeini lays out not only his concept of revolutionary Islam—an aspect of his thought well-known in the West—but also two other equally important aspects of his thought not so well known, especially among the left.*

**Clericalism.** For Khomeini, Iran should not just be an Islamic republic but a clerical republic. The clergy should be the ruling strata in part because—according to the present official mythology—they have been at the forefront of the struggle against despotism since 1925; in part because they are the true interpreters of the law and the state exists solely to implement the law; and in part because the Prophet, before his death, handed the duty and responsibility of guiding and leading the community (mellat) to the clergy ('ulama). Thus, there is a fundamental contradiction between Khomeini's interpretation of Islam and secular notions of democracy. This is why he refused to name the new state "The Islamic Democratic Republic"—a

**I**n the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, let me congratulate all oppressed people and the noble Iranian nation on the occasion of the new year, whose present is the consolidation of the foundation of the Islamic Republic. The will of almighty God, may He be praised, decreed the release of this oppressed nation from the yoke of the tyranny and crimes of the satanical regime and from the yoke of the domination of oppressive powers, especially the government of the world-devouring America, and to unfurl the banner of Islamic justice over our beloved country. It is our duty to stand up to the superpowers and we have the ability to stand up against them, provided that our intellectuals give up their fascination with Westernization or Easternization and follow the straight path of Islam and nationalism.

We are fighting against international communism to the same degree that we are fighting against the Western world—devourers led by America, Israel and Zionism. My dear friends, you should know that the danger from the communist powers is not less than America and the danger of America is such that if we show the slightest negligence we shall be destroyed. Both superpowers have risen for the obliteration of the oppressed nations and we should support the oppressed people of the world. [shouts of "God is great"]

We should try hard to export our revolution to the world, and should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution, because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and is the supporter of all the oppressed people of the world. On the other hand, all the superpowers and all the powers have risen to destroy us. If we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat. We should clearly settle our accounts with the powers and super-

term that had been advanced by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazar-gan in the crucial months of the revolution to alleviate the fears of the secular opposition to the Shah.

**Anti-Marxism.** For Khomeini, the principle "Neither West Nor East" means not only a political struggle against the superpowers (the US and USSR) but, more importantly, an ideological struggle to keep Islam uncontaminated of all foreign ideas, whether they originate in the West or the East (sic). Since Marxism, rather than liberalism or fascism, is the main ideological force among the non-religious groups, the struggle for Islamic purity turns into a war against Marxism. Moreover, since it is the clergy who decide what is true Islam and what is not, non-clerical Islamic groups—namely the revolutionary Mujahidin—are in danger of being denounced as "deviators" and "mixers" of Islam with Marxism. The forthcoming months are likely to see the intensification of the clerical campaign to stamp out not only the Marxist parties but also the radical Islamic groups that do not accept clerical authority.—E. A.

powers and should demonstrate to them that, despite all the grave difficulties that we have, we shall confront the world with our ideology.

My dear youth, who are the object of my attention, take the Koran in one hand and the weapon in the other and so defend your dignity and honor that you can deprive them of the power of thinking and plotting against you. [shouts of approval]

Be so merciful to your friends that you do not cease from bestowing upon them all that you possess. Be aware that today's world is the world of oppressed people and that, sooner or later, theirs is the victory. [shouts of approval] The oppressed are the ones who shall inherit the earth and shall govern by God's decree.

Once again, I announce my support for all movements, fronts, and groups which are fighting in order to escape from the claws of the Eastern or Western superpowers. I announce my support for beloved Palestine and beloved Lebanon. Once again, I strongly condemn the dastardly occupation of Afghanistan by the plunderers and occupiers of the aggressive East. [shouts of "God is great"] I hope that the Muslim and noble people of Afghanistan will as soon as possible achieve true victory and independence and be released from the grip of these so-called supporters of the working classes. [shouts of "God is great"]

The noble nation should know that the entire victory was achieved through the will of almighty God and by means of transformation which came about throughout the country, and through the spirit of faith and a spirit of self-sacrifice, which was manifested in the decisive majority of the nation. Turning toward God and the unity of expression was the basis of our victory. If we forget the secret of victory and we turn away from

great Islam and its holy teachings and if we follow the path of disunity and dissension, there is the danger that the bounty of God almighty may cease and the path may be laid open for the oppressors, and that the deceptions and plots of the satanical powers may put our beloved nation in bondage and waste the pure blood which has been shed on the path of independence and freedom and spoil the hardships which our dear young and old have endured, and that our Islamic country may forever endure that which passed during the satanical regime, and that those who were defeated as a result of the Islamic revolution may do to us that which they did and continue to do to the deprived and oppressed people of the world.

Therefore, being conscious of my divine and religious duty, I remind you of certain points. And his excellency the president and the Revolutionary Council and the government and the security forces are emphatically entrusted with the execution of these points. [shouts of support] I ask the entire nation, with all its power and with its strong allegiance to beloved Islam, to seriously support them throughout the country.

I see that the plots of the anti-revolutionary satans aimed at providing opportunities for the East or the West are increasing. It is the divine, human and national duty of our government and nation to prevent these plots, with all of our ability.

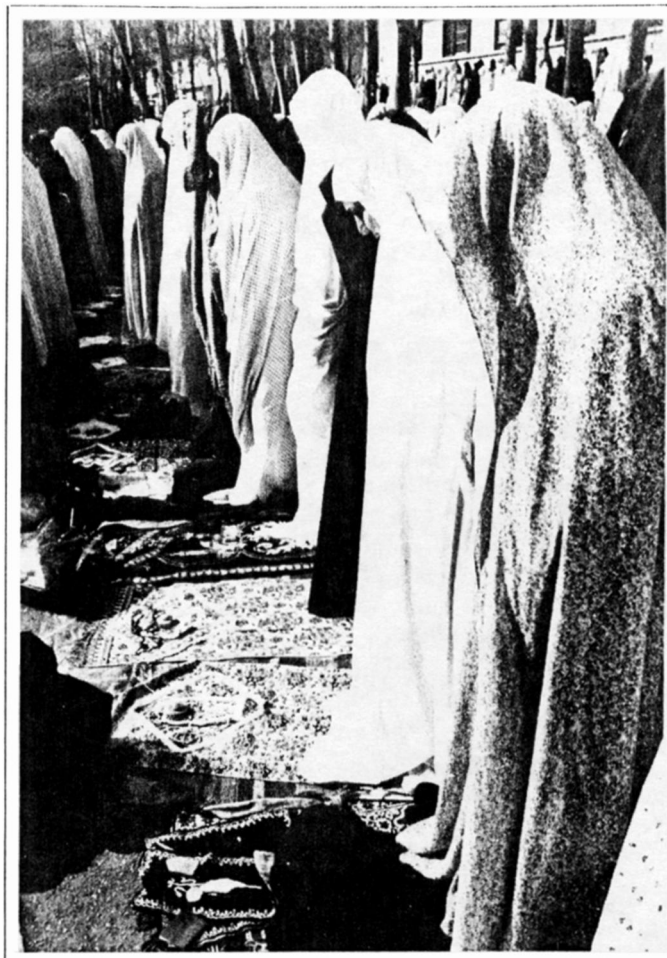
Now, I point out certain issues: [shouts of "God is great"]

1. This year is a year in which security should return to Iran. [shouts of "God is great"] and the noble people live in utmost comfort. Once again, I announce my support for the noble Iranian Armed Forces. [shouts of "God is great"] However, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic should fully observe all laws and regulations. His excellency, the president, who has been appointed commander in chief of the Armed Forces on my behalf, is dutybound to severely punish anyone, regardless of his position and grade, who wishes to create disruption in the army or organize strikes or indulge in slowdowns or violate army discipline and regulations or rebel against army regulations. As soon as an offense has been determined, the president should immediately expel the guilty individual from the Armed Forces and begin legal proceedings against him. I shall no longer tolerate disorder within the army in any form. Whoever causes disruption in the work of the Armed Forces will be presented to the nation as a counterrevolutionary, so that the dear nation may settle its account with the remnants of the criminal Shah's army. [shouts of "God is great"]

My dear military brothers, O you who turned your backs on the vile Shah and his plundering agents and joined the ranks of the nation. Today is the day of service to the nation and to beloved Iran. You should try to save this country from the enemies of Islam and Iran through hard work and endeavor.

2. Once again, I announce my support for the Guards Corps, and I remind them and their commanders that the lightest violation will lead to prosecution. If, God forbid, you do something which may cause disruption in the discipline of the corps, you will be immediately expelled. All that I said about the army will also be carried out concerning them. My revolutionary children, be sure that you deal with all people with kindness and with Islamic manners. [shouts of "God is great"]

3. The police and the gendarmerie of the country should observe order. As I have been informed, there are a great number of slowdowns at police stations. Those who do not have good records should strive to show greater harmony with the people



Women at prayer

Credit: Randy Goodman

and in order to establish order throughout Iran. They should regard themselves as part of the nation. I hope that in the future a fundamental reorganization be carried out in the gendarmerie and the police. The security forces should regard themselves as belonging to Islam and the Muslims. The explosions in the south have greatly aggrieved me; why do not the corps and the police and gendarmerie clearly identify and punish a group of ungodly persons dependent on the former regime, corrupt, foreign and dependent on America? These people are guilty of sowing corruption on earth, both those who directly take part in such actions and those who guide the affairs from afar. Their conviction as those who are guilty of sowing corruption on earth is clear. The Revolution Courts should show greater decisiveness, so that they may uproot them. [shouts of "God is great"]

4. Revolution Courts throughout the country should be perfect examples of the implementation of God's religion. They should try not to be diverted from the teachings of God almighty, even by one step. They should observe complete care. They should sit in justice with revolutionary patience. The courts have no right to have armed forces of their own. They should act according to the constitution and gradually the Islamic judicial system should take over the responsibilities of the courts. Therefore, they should prevent wrongdoings with utmost decisiveness and if, God forbid, a person has violated God's teachings, this should immediately be made known to the nation and he should be punished. [shouts of "God is great"]

5. The government is dutybound to provide the means of labor and production for workers, farmers and laborers. However, they too should know that strikes and slowdowns will not only strengthen the superpowers, but also cause the hope of the oppressed people in the Islamic and non-Islamic countries who have risen to be turned into despair. The people of each city, as soon as they learn of a strike at a factory, should go to that place and see what they want. You should identify the counterrevolutionaries and make them known to the people. The noble people of Iran can no longer pay unearned salaries to a number of ungodly people. [shouts of approval]

My dear workers, you should know that those who every day create tumult in a corner of the country and who basically come to the field with the logic of force are your headstrong enemies and wish to turn you away from the path of the revolution. They are dictators, who if they ever come to power will not allow anyone to breathe. You should fight against them in all fields and identify them to the public as your number one enemy and reveal their connection and dependence upon the aggressive East or the colonial West. The government is duty-bound to severely punish those who are involved in such actions. [shouts of approval]

6. I do not understand why the government is not reactivating the wheels of industry, which have stopped and are in the interest of the public. The government should, as soon as possible, implement the projects which have been stopped and are in the interest of the nation, as well as some new projects, so that the economic situation of our country may be set right. [shouts of "God is great"]

7. In government departments, all government employees must obey the government elected by the people; otherwise, harsh actions are needed. Anybody who wishes to disrupt a government department should be expelled immediately and should be made known to the nation. I am amazed at how the responsible officials are not making use of the strength of the people. The people themselves will settle their accounts with the counterrevolutionaries and expose them. [shouts of "God is great"]

8. The confiscation of the property of the oppressors by unauthorized individuals or unqualified courts is strongly condemned. All confiscations should be carried out according to religious regulations, with the verdict of the prosecutor or the court judges. No one else has any right to interfere in such actions. The violators should be severely punished. [shouts of "God is great"]

9. The distribution of land should be carried out according to religious regulations; and when it is proved that somebody's land should be distributed, only the qualified courts have the right to seize the land. No one else has any right to trespass on anybody's land, place of residence or orchard and, basically, unqualified individuals have no right to interfere in such actions. However, they can pass to responsible officials informa-

tion concerning the land, house or orchards of members of the satanical regime who have wrongfully usurped other people's property. If anybody commits an action contrary to Islamic principles and regulations, he will be vigorously prosecuted. [shouts of "God is great"]

10. The Housing Foundation and the Foundation of the Oppressed should produce as soon as possible the balance sheets of their actions so that the people may be informed of the activities of these two revolutionary organs. The Housing Foundation should clarify how much work it has performed; and the Foundation of the Oppressed should clearly publish the list of movable and real property of the satanical people, especially the Shah, his family and his filthy lackeys throughout Iran and should announce what they have carried out so far. They should say to whom they have given the property of the traitorous Shah.

Is it true that the Foundation of the Oppressed has been turned into the foundation of the oppressors? If this is so, purging is necessary and to neglect this important matter is forbidden. These two foundations should clearly explain to the people why they have not been able to carry out their duties faster. If some people are committing evil deeds in the name of the oppressed, it is the duty of all the courts throughout Iran to act with speed. [shouts of "God is great"]

11. Revolution should come about in all the universities throughout Iran, so that the professors who are in contact with the East or the West will be purged, and so that the universities may become healthy places for the study of higher Islamic teachings. The false teachings of the former regime should be abruptly stopped in universities throughout Iran because all the misery of the Iranian society during the reign of this father and son was due to these false teachings. If we had a proper set-up in our universities, we would have never had a university-educated intelligentsia who during Iran's most critical period are engaged in conflict and schism among themselves and are cut off from the people and are so negligent of what happens to the people, as though they do not live in Iran. [shouts of "God is great"] All of our backwardness is due to the lack of proper understanding by most of the university intellectuals of the Islamic society of Iran. Unfortunately, the same thing is still true. Most of the deadly blows which have been delivered to this society have been due to the majority of these university-educated intellectuals who have always regarded—and still regard—themselves as being great and have always said things—and still continue to say things—which only their other intellectual friends can understand, regardless of whether the people understand them or not. Because the public is of no significance to them and all that is important to them is themselves. This is due to the fact that false university education during the reign of the Shah so trained university-educated intellectuals that they attached no value whatsoever to the oppressed masses. Unfortunately, even now it is the same.

Committed and responsible intellectuals, you should set aside dissension and schism and should think of the people and you should free yourselves from the evil of the "isms" and "ists" of the East or the West, for the sake of the salvation of the people, who have given martyrs. You should stand on your own feet and should refrain from relying on foreigners. The students of religious teaching and university students should carefully study Islamic principles and should set aside the slogans of deviant groups and should replace all deviationist

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**The people of each city, as soon as they learn of a strike at a factory, should go to that factory, should go to that place and see what they want. You should identify the counterrevolutionaries and make them known to the people.**

thinking with beloved and genuine Islam. Religion students and university students should know that Islam is itself a rich school, which is never in need of grafting any other ideologies to it. All you should know that mixed thinking is a betrayal of Islam and the Muslims [shouts of "God is great"] and the bitter results of such thinking will become apparent in future years.

Most regrettably, at times it can be seen that due to the lack of the proper and precise understanding of Islamic issues, some people have mixed Islamic ideas with Marxist ideas and have created a concoction which is in no way in accordance with the progressive teachings of Islam. Dear students, do not follow the wrong path of the uncommitted university intellectuals and do not separate yourselves from the people.

12. Another issue is the press and the mass media. Once again, I ask all the press throughout Iran to come and join hands and freely write about the issues, but not to engage in plots. I have repeatedly said that the press should be independent and free.

But unfortunately and with great amazement I have seen a number of them engaged in implementing the evil designs of the right or the left, most unjustly, in Iran; and they are still doing it. In every country the press plays an essential role in the creation of a healthy or unhealthy atmosphere. I hope that they will engage in service to God and the people. Also, radio and television should be independent and free and should broadcast every kind of criticism with complete impartiality, so that once again we will not see the radio and television from the time of the deposed Shah. Radio and television should be purged of its pro-Shah or deviant elements. [shouts of "God is great"]

13. These days, through the agents of the Shah and his lackeys, attacks have increased on the true clergy, who in fact, both at the time of the Shah and at the time of his father, were among the most distinguished strata of the nation, who through their numerous uprisings against the corruption of the regime engaged in struggle and divulged the crimes of the regime. Throughout the rightful struggles of the noble nation against the Shah and America, the clergy led the struggles that led to victory. Exactly at the time when the clergy started its irrepressible struggle against the traitorous Shah in the years 1962 and 1963, the Shah called the committed and responsible clergy black reactionaries, because the only serious threat to him and to his rule came from the struggling clergy, who had roots in the depth of the souls of the people and stood up against him and against his oppression. Now, the agents of the Shah have again put the word reaction into the mouths of my children who are unaware of the depth of the issues, in order to crush the clergy, who are the foundation of independence and freedom of this country. My beloved and revolutionary children: Today the insulting and the weakening of the role of the clergy is a blow against independence, freedom and Islam. Today, it is treason to follow the path of the traitorous Shah and use the word treason concerning this respected class, who are among the most distinguished strata, not accepting either the yoke of the East or that of the West.

My dear sisters and brothers, you should know that those people who regard the clergy as reactionary are, ultimately, following the path of the Shah and America. [shouts of "God is great"] The noble Iranian nation, by supporting the genuine and committed Iranian clergy, who have always been the guardians and protectors of this country, will remit their debts to Islam and will cut off the hands of all of history's oppressors of their country.

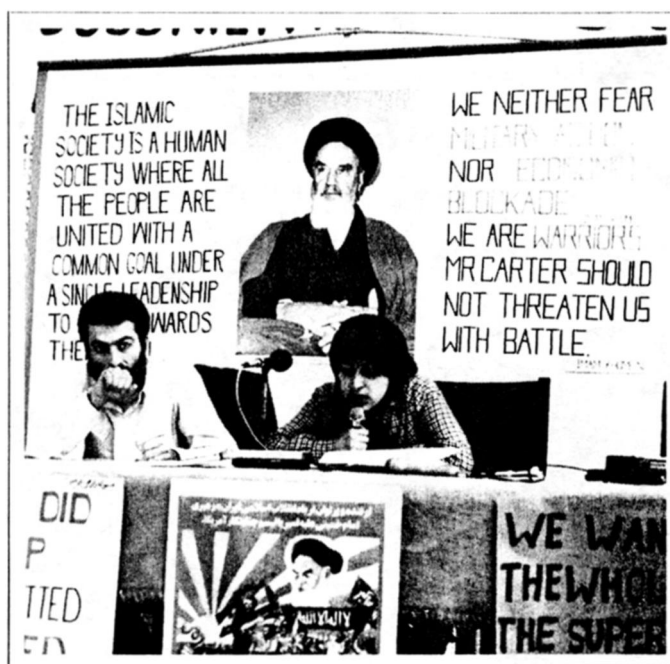
On the other hand, I announce to the respected clergy, wherever they are, that it is possible that the satans and their agents may engage in hostile propaganda against the dear youth, especially the university students. The clergy should know that today all strata of the nation, especially these two respected strata, who are the intellectual power of the nation, should join hands and fight against satanic forces and the oppressors and advance the Islamic movement in united ranks and protect independence and freedom as they would their own dear lives. It was the plan of the world-devourers and their agents to separate these two effective and thinking strata from one another during the satanic regime; and, unfortunately, they were successful and they ruined the country. This plan is once again being implemented and with the slightest negligence we shall be ruined.

I hope that all strata of the nation, especially these two respected strata, will not be negligent of plots and conspiracies in the new year and will nullify the evil plans through their unity of expression. [shouts of "God is great"]

Finally, after praying for forgiveness for the martyrs of the Islamic Revolution and expressing gratitude for their self-sacrifice, it is necessary on this new year to express my congratulations to their relatives, to their mothers and fathers and congratulate them on their being able to train such lions and lionesses. Also, I wish to congratulate the injured and the crippled of the revolution, who were pioneers in the advancement of the movement of the nation and the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Verily, our Islamic revolution is indebted to the self-sacrifice of these two beloved groups. I and the nation will not forget their brave deeds and will honor their memory.

I beseech almighty God for the greatness of Islam and the Muslims. God's greetings and blessings be upon you.

Source: Radio Tehran, March 21, 1980; translated in FBIS, March 24, 1980.



Inside the captured Embassy

Credit: Randy Goodman