talist establishment. Often faceless men who are wholly unknown emerge right behind the front man, who may be only the titular leader. They may never really be known unless they succeed, which is still a question.

The Reagan faction, as opposed to Haig, has of late been talking even tougher than Haig himself. Whether this is to ingratiate themselves with the military or to strengthen their position in the extreme right of their so-called constituency is hard to know. But it should be plain to all that on the basis of public pronouncements by either of the factions, there is no fundamental difference in policy.

The Vance-Brzezinski struggle had at least this merit: that one could easily see, even when attempts were made to cover it up, that Vance was speaking a softer and more moderate line; he ultimately resigned or, more correctly, was ousted. The so-called liberal imperialist faction of the moderates was broken up and defeated.

Here there is not even a semblance of difference between the principal protagonists in the factional arena, certainly not so far as military adventures or domestic reaction are concerned. The organic tendency of the military in the epoch of imperialist decay to more and more encroach on the civilian arm of the government should of course be a matter of deep concern to the civilian administrators of the imperialist state. Yet the propensity of the capitalist politicians, especially the more rightist elements in the House and Senate, is to outdo even the military in their ostentatious posturing for approval by the military chieftains.

Last Sunday, March 29, the administration trotted out Defense Secretary Weinberger, Secretary of State Haig, and Senate Foreign Relations chairman Percy. They were interviewed on the three separate talk shows on ABC, CBS, and NBC. No one attentively listening to them could possibly detect a difference in substance, even on minor aspects of the matter they dealt with: the Soviet Union and the Polish crisis. It was clear, however, that each in his own way was trying to outdo the others in the ferocity of his attack and unrestrained threats against the USSR.

Reagan planning a switch on SALT?

Nevertheless, a slight shift in emphasis or the appearance of it here and there by one of them could be the cause or the pretext for an assault by the other. Take for instance this item which appeared in *Newsweek* magazine dated April 6 but obviously written before the assassination attempt:

"He may have to bite his tongue, but Ronald Reagan plans to reverse a campaign position and endorse arms control this week in public remarks welcoming Dutch Prime Minister Andreas van Agt to Washington. Since taking office, Reagan has decided that he must support SALT if he expects to win concessions from Europeans on other matters. The President particularly fears that European countries will refuse to deploy the Pentagon's new cruise missile if the administration doesn't give at least lip service to arms control."

This is an extraordinary revelation, if true. It is noteworthy that it got little, if any, publicity in the rest of the press or media, to our knowledge. It may, perhaps, have been no more than a trial balloon. It may also have been the first step in preparing right-wing public opinion, or it may be altogether untrue. Nevertheless, the White House didn't rush to discount such a significant report coming from a magazine with a tremendous mass circulation and eminent big business credentials.

Is it altogether impossible that this could have been the impetus for a military cabal to undertake a coup? If it was not impossible for the British with their more stable capitalist establishment, how can it be regarded as impossible for a capitalist establishment which still aspires not merely to be the policeman of the world but to dominate it financially, economically, and of course militarily?

Those who look upon the virulent factional struggle in the capitalist establishment as merely a struggle for naked power bereft of deeper, fundamental causes, are looking at symptoms and not at the driving forces behind the struggle. The principal contradiction which motivates the current struggle is of an extremely acute and insoluble character.

It derives from the extreme right-wing character of the various reactionary groupings in the Reaganite coalition. The driving force behind these groupings is Big Oil, the military-industrial complex, and the military itself. The program which they have set themselves in the field of domestic politics, such as massive cuts in such fields as medical care, mass transportation, the environment, and so on, all inexorably tend to slow down the economy, lead it into stagnation as well as galloping inflation. It's a program of economic and industrial **contraction**.

At the same time, with a program of absolutely stupendous and unprecedented defense expenditures, they are embarking on a course of military **expansion**. This contradiction between economic and industrial contraction and military expansion can in the long run only lead to a catastrophe.

The factional struggles in the capitalist establishment merely reflect the irreconcilability of this basic contradiction. This in turn flows from the nature of decadent monopoly capitalism itself, where the individual, private ownership of the means of production increasingly comes into collision with the highly social mode in which production takes place. Only the massive intervention of the working class and the oppressed people can resolve this contradiction and at the same time truly put an end to imperialism's mad race to destruction.

April 1, 1981

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Civil war in the capitalist establishment (part 2)

All across the country, people everywhere are asking themselves a week after the attempted assassination, "Who won out in the power struggle in the capitalist establishment?"

Was it Weinberger? Was it Haig? The capitalist press is trying to put a good face on the continuing struggle between the major contending factions in the Reagan administration.

Who actually gained political authority?

The unheralded answer is **the unbridled military.**

It doesn't necessarily mean Haig. It is, however, absolutely beyond question that the military came out of the struggle with enormously increased political authority.

More power to Joint Chiefs of Staff

The capitalist press has deliberately shied away from attributing any political significance to the shift in authority or giving a hint as to how and why it happened. On the contrary, it has deliberately obscured the shift. That the shift took place, however, is beyond doubt.

This was revealed in an order issued by Deputy Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci at the direct order of Weinberger himself on Wednesday, April 1. (See *New York Times,* April 2.) This order, while purporting to be a reorganization plan of the Pentagon, actually delegates to the Joint Chiefs of Staff **political** authority as distinguished from military authority. It reverses an executive order issued during the Robert McNamara era under President Kennedy which sought to block the Joint Chiefs from intruding into the budgetary process of appropriating military expenditures.

As the *Times* puts it, "It would include planning budgets to carry out strategy, bringing the chiefs into a process from which they have long complained that they were excluded."

This process is a wholly political one and is the prerogative in almost all bourgeois democracies, and especially in the U.S., of Congress and most particularly the House of Representatives, which has the power of the purse, so to speak.

This order for the first time brings the Joint Chiefs of Staff into the budgetary process. It means that the military can openly lobby for military appropriations over and above the usual normal procedures where the military may—the word "may" is key—be called in during Congressional hearings. It is almost always the case that they are at least publicly under the discipline of the Secretary of Defense, a civilian, and that they themselves merely justify or approve the position of the Secretary of Defense.

This order reverses this process and gives the military the so-called right to articulate and dissent. It opens the door to them not merely on matters involving the budget, but also implies that they can articulate or dissent from broader political issues, such as SALT and other issues.

Of course, the military has always found ways to circumvent this restriction by leaking their position to the press. But in general they have had, at least in public and in congressional hearings especially, to abide by the discipline supposedly imposed by the commander-in-chief so as not to transcend his authority or be guilty of intruding into the political process.

This order then is a major concession to the military and undercuts the political authority of the bourgeois civilian establishment.

Invalidates zero-based budgeting

The order does more than just that. The order also invalidates the so-called principle of zero-based budgeting.

This required the military to justify—that is explain, show the need for, and put in writing—every year any request for a new program or more money. Now, this restriction has been invalidated.

What it means is that the Pentagon can put in tabs, vouchers, and plans for more money without justifying it or explaining why they need it! This is incredible. All the more so when one compares this with how such an order would be greeted if it was put in effect in the Office of Economic Opportunity, OSHA, Health and Human Resources, etc.

Imagine what a storm of abuse the capitalist press would heap on the secretary of a department who issued such an order. According to the *New York Times,* Weinberger supports this order on the ground that the old process—the zero-based budgeting—"required too much paperwork and 'served no tangible purpose.' "

And this comes from "Cap the Knife," the man who has made his career by slashing to the bone vital life-sustaining services and social programs in health care, education, welfare, etc.

Only an utterly shameless and servile press and media in fear of the military could possibly avoid raising this order to public view and soundly condemning it.

How did shift of power occur?

How does it happen that this shift of power to the military has suddenly taken place? It has come as a result of the furious struggle for power in the capitalist establishment.

Weinberger issued this order in an attempt at what he undoubtedly conceives to be a clever maneuver to win over the military in a struggle with Haig who unquestionably has a military faction behind him.

In so doing Weinberger is not merely attempting to appease the military. He has given it another opportunity to independently increase its steady and consistent encroachment on civilian authority and arrogate to itself ever so unobtrusively more and more political authority.

The Weinberger grouping no doubt is just as belligerent, just as virulently anti-Soviet and reactionary as the Haig faction. But in the struggle the military gains **independent** political strength and is clearly gaining the potential to stand over and above the