

France's Raymond Offroy

'I know Washington's peanut brigade'

On May 28, Ambassador Raymond Offroy granted an interview to the French Journal du Parlement which we excerpt here.

Q: Mr. Offroy, you wrote an article for *Le Monde* on May 6 which was really explosive . . . you make the grave accusation that the American expedition in Iran wasn't meant to succeed.

A: That is exactly what I think. I have said it and I will reiterate it. The failure was expected and it was, in practice, organized: not enough helicopters, stolen filters, the weakness of the commando units, the vulnerability of the whole operation show that. . . .

Last February, I followed the Reagan, Bush, Brown, and a bit of the Kennedy presidential campaigns. I gave conferences on the European problem and the European conception of the double Iran-Afghanistan crisis in front of different American audiences. . . .

I especially listened from Boston to Texas. They told me: "American public opinion will force President Carter to undertake a military operation in Iran."

I told them: "There is a lot of talk of Entebbe, but it would not be the same thing in Teheran, where the American embassy is stuck in the middle of a capital city with four to five million inhabitants, with crowds watching day and night in front of the building. . . .

Numerous high level personalities I talked to just replied: "We will carry out the operation even if we are not going to succeed. You are going to see what you are going to see."

Q: They used that tone of voice?

A: Yes, that tone of voice, an authoritarian tone in which I saw how they despise Europe and the Europeans. . . .

They added: "You Frenchmen, you the Europeans, you must follow us. It is required that you follow us."

Q: Isn't it unthinkable that the Americans would launch a floundering operation in order to fail?

A: The facts are there. The proof is there. In the same way that the Russians made a show of force by invading Afghanistan, the Americans wanted to make a show of force to let us know that, they are not isolationists.

The failure or the gesture itself was not important. . . . Cyrus Vance was not mistaken when he tendered his

resignation even before the launching of the operation . . . I immediately cast aside the explanation that the Americans were clumsy, and I must add that the expedition launched on Teheran in April 1980 was ruined since November 1979. They acted like a gentleman who would leave for a long trip taking only \$10 for his expenses. It is assured that such a gentleman will get into trouble.

Q: According to what you think and know, the Americans are trying to transform the nations of Europe into satellites . . . Isn't that going too far?

A: Not at all. I go as far as to say that the Americans plan to threaten European oil supplies through an eventual blockade of the Straits of Hormuz. One of the presidential candidates (you will note his gross ignorance) reproached me, a Frenchman, for not putting the Djibouti military base at the disposal of the American fleet!

Q: You told him Djibouti is independent? . . . Did you speak to the close advisors of President Carter?

A: Yes, I have seen those who call themselves the "peanut brigade." The peanut has become such a symbol that my wife was offered an honorary peanut. . . .

Q: Will there be a war? Should we expect it?

A: Neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union want a war. But we run the risk of a stupid accident, a Sarajewo.

Q: Because of the Americans?

A: Presently America doesn't yet know very well how far is too far. What I can say for sure is that a rapprochement between the U.S.A. and China would absolutely not be tolerated by the Russians. It would mean war.

Q: How can we avoid that trap laid for us?

A: The West must open negotiations with Moscow to reach an equilibrium in armaments for Europe. Without it, we will see the Americans trying to impress the Russians with military initiatives, and either the Russians will get impressed and Europe will become a vassal of America, or the Russians will go straight ahead and it's war in Europe, because we will be the battlefield and the Americans will intervene only if they deem it opportune. There is, in the U.S.S.R., a team of "young," hawkish "turks," and in America there is Brzezinski. . . . Muskie is only a shadow and doesn't know the first thing about Europe.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, I ask you one last question, which is a weighty one . . . is Brzezinski dangerous?

A: He is a very dangerous man, much more than the diplomatic Kissinger was. He is of Polish origin and wants revenge on the Russians for everything they did to Poland. Brzezinski is vengeful; he wants the Soviet Union to bite the dust, but it is we who will be forced to.