

Iran slides toward civil war

Iran's strongman Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has launched a wave of political repression and terror in Iran which has set that troubled nation on a course toward civil war.

Since Khomeini came to power earlier this year, numerous prominent Anglo-American policymakers have predicted a superpower crisis emerging as the ultra-rightwing religious establishment, led by Khomeini, and the Iranian left became increasingly polarized. A cold warriors meeting in March at Averill Harriman's Arden House predicted just such a scenario for Iran. About the same time a top organizer from General Haig's presidential campaign, W. Scott Thompson of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, projected that Iran would become a center of conflict between the big powers which would create the crisis environment in the U.S. on which Haig could capitalize politically. Earlier this month, former Undersecretary of State George Ball, editorially predicted that the collapse of Iran would produce political crises throughout the Persian Gulf, and another general oil crisis.

Once Khomeini forces a civil war, well-placed Iranian sources indicate, the U.S. is prepared to occupy Iran's oilfields in the chaos; such a move, the source noted, throws into question how the Soviets—who share a 1,500 mile long border with Iran—would respond.

As well, the recent Khomeini provocations are coherent with the Bernard Lewis plan to balkanize the Middle East around religious minorities.

French journalist Serge Maffert writing in *Le Figaro*, August 20,, warned of the prospect of an international crisis over Iran, which Khomeini is inviting:

"A rapid disintegration of Iranian society has already begun. Groups and grouplets are being spawned. The provinces are being organized into closed political units. The minorities are thinking only of autonomy. Oil is at the mercy of the unions controlled by the communists. Iran is moving towards a grouping of fiefdoms. The Soviet Union and the U.S. cannot be disinterested in what happens in Iran. This country plays a major role in the equilibrium of the world because of its oil and geopolitical position. Since the beginning of the Iranian revolution, the U.S. has had

no coherent policy for Iran, being content with observing the apparent extreme prudence of the Soviet Union.

"But whether they like it or not the Americans and the Soviets will be fatally summoned to confront one another over Iran if chaos definitely triumphs in this unhappy country."

Maffert warned that while there is growing anti-Khomeini sentiment throughout Iran, the opposition to Khomeini's theocracy is fragmented, with no strong centralized leadership inside the country. To date the various opposition groups, most importantly the leadership of the National Front and the National Democratic Front—the two leading secular Republican Parties—have not formulated a program for the reconstruction of Iran. The Khomeini camp's adoption of anti-industrial zero-growth economic policy has left the once-developing economy in shambles, and throughout the opposition—from the right wing to the left—the issue of Iran's economic stagnation under Khomeini is a crucial unifying factor. But up to the present time, not even the most outspoken and most respected opposition leader, former Premier Shahpur Bakhtiar, has put forth a plan for reconstructing Iran's economy.

Countdown to conflict

On July 31, Bakhtiar, the man Khomeini forced out of power and into exile in France, gave a press conference to inaugurate a full-scale public campaign to overthrow Khomeini. Bakhtiar has broad backing from the large middle and upper class Iranian exiles as well as the remaining intelligentsia within Iran, but is not at this time in command of the mass forces necessary to oust the Khomeini machine.

A week after Bakhtiar's press conference, Khomeini held countrywide elections to form a constituent assembly (council of experts) to quickly ratify the constitution of the Islamic Republic. Knowing full well that the most reactionary of pro-Khomeini mullahs (priests) would be elected by fraud, a wide array of political groupings, even members of the secular wing of Khomeini's government (including Central Bank head Mowlavi and National Iranian Oil Company chief Nazih) led by Premier Mehdi Bazargan, as well as Iran's second most powerful religious leader Ayatollah

The contending factions in Iran

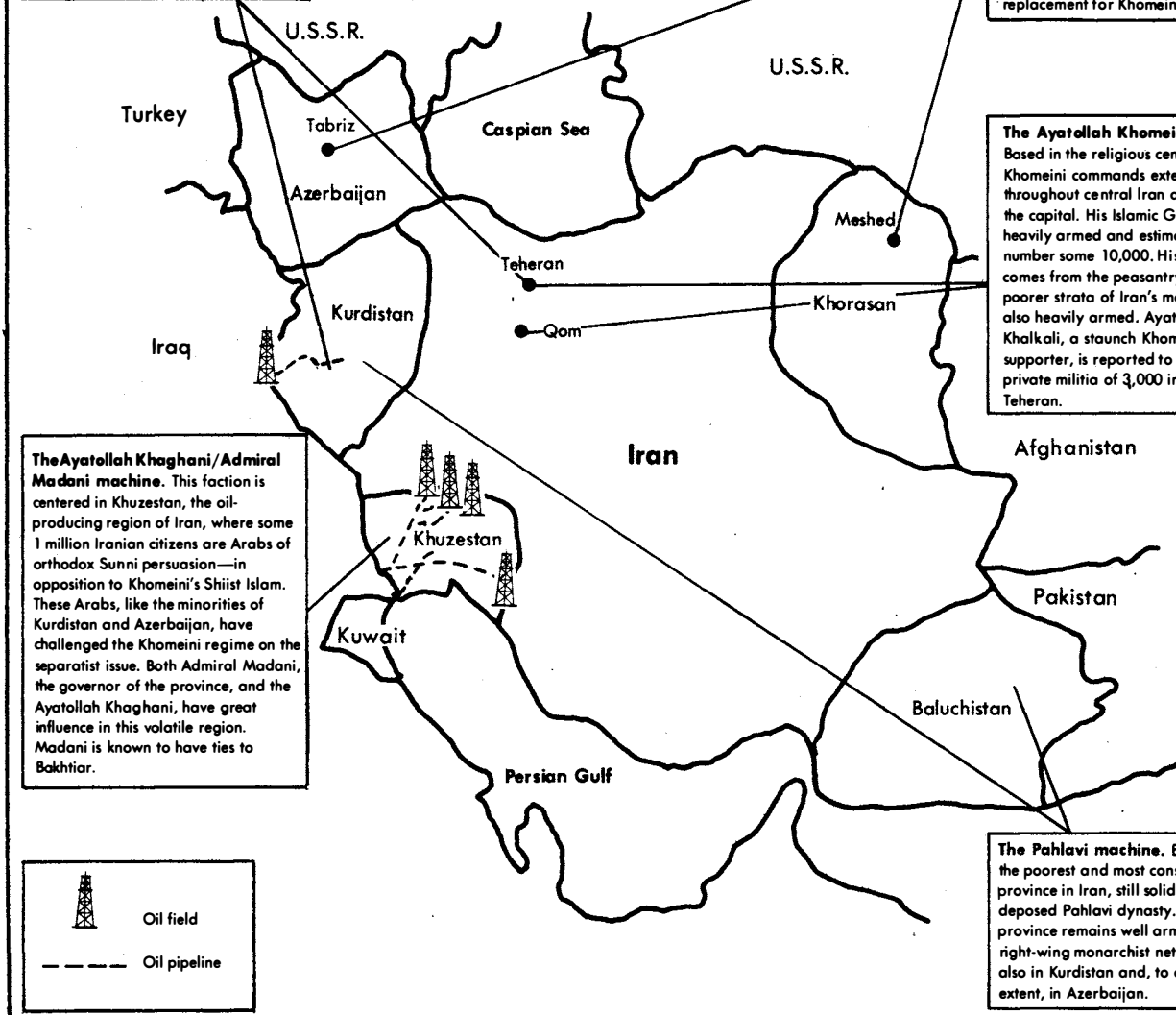
The Ayatollah Taleghani machine. The left-leaning Ayatollah Taleghani holds popular and military support from two militant groups, the Mujaheddine al Khalq and the Fedayeen al Khalq, amounting to 10,000 armed and trained guerrillas. Taleghani also has considerable support from the National Front and the left-of-center National Democratic Front, as well as backing from separatists in Kurdistan and Khuzistan.

The Ayatollah Shariatmadari machine. Combined support for Ayatollah Shariatmadari in Azerbaijan and Khorasan is well over 10 million, or more than one-third of Iran's total population. There are also reports of powerful militias comprised of former imperial troops in Azerbaijan where General Oveissi, the former chief of staff, is reported to command 10,000 troops. Much of this machine backs former premier Shahpur Bakhtiar as a replacement for Khomeini.

The Ayatollah Khomeini machine. Based in the religious center of Qom, Khomeini commands extensive support throughout central Iran and Teheran, the capital. His Islamic Guard is heavily armed and estimated to number some 10,000. His support comes from the peasantry and the poorer strata of Iran's major cities, also heavily armed. Ayatollah Khalkali, a staunch Khomeini supporter, is reported to command a private militia of 3,000 in Qom and Teheran.

The Ayatollah Khaghani/Admiral Madani machine. This faction is centered in Khuzestan, the oil-producing region of Iran, where some 1 million Iranian citizens are Arabs of orthodox Sunni persuasion—in opposition to Khomeini's Shiist Islam. These Arabs, like the minorities of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, have challenged the Khomeini regime on the separatist issue. Both Admiral Madani, the governor of the province, and the Ayatollah Khaghani, have great influence in this volatile region. Madani is known to have ties to Bakhtiar.

The Pahlavi machine. Baluchistan, the poorest and most conservative province in Iran, still solidly backs the deposed Pahlavi dynasty. And the province remains well armed. Similar right-wing monarchist networks exist also in Kurdistan and, to a lesser extent, in Azerbaijan.



Shariatmadari, condemned the elections.

Following the fraudulent election of 72 pro-Khomeini mullahs, the Iranian press began to attack the aging Khomeini's dictatorial tactics more openly. At the same time Ayatollah Shariatmadari departed for Meshed in the eastern province of Khorasan to organize support away from Khomeini giving him the allegiance of well over one-third of the nation's population. Bakhtiar continued his public attacks on Khomeini's state-

craft and inept economic policies, which have halted all economic activity (See *Executive Intelligence Review*, Vol. VI, no. 32).

On Aug. 7, Khomeini suddenly took a drastic retaliatory move and announced the closing of the newspaper *Ayandegan* and the arrest of its editorial staff. *Ayandegan*, a daily widely read by anti-Khomeini elements, was the most outspoken critic of the Islamic Republic.

Georgetown professor backs Khomeini's Pol Pot economic plan

According to Thomas Ricks, a professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., what is in store for Iran is the depopulation of Iran's cities and the forcing of Iran's Westernized urban population back to the land in Maoist-Cambodian style agricultural projects. For years Ricks has profiled, nurtured, and supported pro-Khomeini "Islamic" fanatics—such as Khomeini's foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi. Ricks has coordinated his sordid activities with his colleagues at Georgetown, whose liberal "pro-Arab" Center for Contemporary Arab Studies is but a front operation for manipulating and subverting the Islamic world.

Earlier this month, Abdulhassan Banisadr was appointed Iran's Deputy Finance Minister by Khomeini. An outspoken proponent of genocidal zero-growth economics, Banisadr has publicly called for Iran's economy to be modeled after Pol Pot's Cambodia. When asked what he thought about Banisadr's endorsement of Cambodia-style economics, Ricks stated the following:

"I like what Banisadr is pushing: ruralization by persuasion. A more appropriate phrase might be ruralization by voluntarism. Volunteering to go out into the countryside is popular among Iranian youth. They want to dedicate themselves to two or three years in the rural areas. So there's no need for government force, except in the case of professionals like doctors, who will have to be pressured into making the move. Cambodia's policy of dismantling cities is now being applied to Iran.

Iran needs labor-intensive cooperatives. Too much land is lying fallow. Only 11 percent of the land is being cultivated. . . . The investment patterns of Iran are being reversed. There is a decision to increase the rural force, to drop the urban population from its current 42 percent to 35 percent or so in the next years, by shifting more people to the countryside. The future for politics in Iran is in the rural areas. The radicalization of Iranian ideology will begin in this way."

The move by Khomeini predictably sparked a massive demonstration in Tehran on Aug. 11, of over 100,000 protesting the closure, organized by the influential National Democratic Front led by the grandson of revolutionary leader Mohammed Mossadegh, Hedayatollah Matin-Daftari, along with the leftist Fedayeen al-Khalq and Mujahedeen al Khalq and numerous other smaller political groupings.

Lighting the fuse

The demonstration was forcefully broken up by Khomeini's Islamic Guard using clubs and broken bottles, sending hundreds to the hospitals. The next day Khomeini's fanatical followers, primarily from the slums of south Tehran, began a systematic campaign of ransacking the offices of the various opposition parties, beating opposition figures.

The offices and the home of Matin-Daftari, a close ally of Bakhtiar, have been ransacked and a warrant issued for the arrest of the National Democratic Front leader. The offices of the Iranian Communist Party have been closed as well as those of former Khomeini supporters, the Mujahedeen and the Fedayeen al Khalq, who have broken allegiance to the Ayatollah and have gone underground.

Khomeini has since announced the closing of 22 more Iranian newspapers, plus a new and more stringent set of regulations for foreign press: expelling more

foreign pressmen from the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the British Broadcasting Company, and the *Financial Times*. He has furthermore called for full disarmament of all civilians, a clear warning to the heavily armed Mujahedeen and Fedayeen guerrilla organizations whose base of operation is Tehran. At the same time, Khomeini has initiated a treacherous campaign against the leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, Dr. Abdulrahman Qassemou, and Kurdish religious leader Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini. Khomeini referred to the powerful KDP as the "party of Satan."

A former Iranian diplomat has characterized Khomeini's provocations as "suicide . . . he is alienating the entire country by these tactics." He stated that Khomeini is trying to "smoke out" his opposition for a confrontation. In particular he noted that if Khomeini does not believe he can rebuild Iran's military then he must force a confrontation with the left, particularly the Mujahedeen and Fedayeen, two large and well armed guerrilla groups. Yussef Ibrahim in the *New York Times* of August 16 reports:

"The strength of the Fedayeen who saw portents of the clergy's assault against the left months ago, is believed to be 3,000 to 4,000 men under arms. According to Iranian sources, they maintain caches of weapons and ammunition that were replenished by raiding army bases. The Mujahedeen al Khalq has over 5,000 trained guerrillas. Both the Fedayeen and the Mujahedeen are

well-organized politically and highly disciplined, having formed political cells in the oilfields of Khuzistan and among the factory workers. The Fedayeen have established friendly ties with the 3.5 million Kurds who have risen in revolt since February to demand autonomy."

The writer, Yussef Ibrahim, predicts that both the Fedayeen, the Mujahedeen, the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh), the National Democratic Front, and the National Front are on a collision course with the Islamic clergy.

The 'blood judge'

Khomeini's blind determination to take on the forces now opposing his regime is reportedly the product of a recent coup inside his highly secretive Revolutionary Council of Mullahs. Iranian sources state that Khomeini has been won over by the rabid Ayatollah Khalkhali, the leader of the fanatical Fedayeen-i Islam, the most extreme wing of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood movement in the Mideast. The *Christian Science Monitor*, Aug. 21, reports such a shift within the Khomeini inner elite:

"... There is another body of influential opinion that suggests Ayatollah Khomeini was the victim of a massive misinformation campaign launched by religious extremists around him, with the complicity of a loyal cadre in the cabinet.

"One source with close links to the government said the extremists were trying to shake the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan until it fell and move in to take its place.

"The campaign, the source said, had been under way for as long as three months: 'I can only come to the conclusion that Khomeini is being relentlessly pushed by his advisors in Qom toward a change in government.'"

Informed sources reveal that Ayatollah Khalkhali is in fact not even an Ayatollah but an ultra-radical anarchist who donned the cover of Ayatollah to command a following. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported Aug. 22 that Khalkhali has become known in Iran as the "blood judge" because of overseeing over 200 executions by the Islamic Khomitehs since Khomeini's takeover. It is under Khalkhali's supervision that Khomeini has instigated a round of executions in Kurdistan which are expected to spark violent retaliation from Kurdish rebels. Khalkhali is known to have undergone extensive mental therapy prior to his religious "conversion" at Iran's Chehrizi Hospital and continues to be mentally unstable.

According to a source with close ties into the Khomeini camp, Khalkhali is only being used to create "conditions of chaos"—Khomeini's pretext for appointing a general to replace Premier Mehdi Bazargan. The source reveals that Khomeini wants General Rahimi, the former head of the Islamic regime's military

The Pahlavi dynasty joins Dope, Inc.

The deposed ruler of Iran, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, has currently integrated his vast resources with those of the same international drug trafficking networks who were, ironically, responsible for his overthrow. Once laundered, the Shah's multi-billion dollar capabilities will be deployable for a range of destabilization activities inside Iran and for other terrorist-connected dirty tricks.

Now exiled in Mexico, the Shah has been meeting regularly with, and receiving advice from, Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. Secretary of State whose geopolitical global strategies were directly responsible for the Shah's collapse. Kissinger's footsteps to the Shah have intermeshed with the unfortunate Richard Nixon, an earlier victim of Kissinger.

The Shah's director of security in Mexico is Robert Armao. Armao is a head of the New York-based Coalition for Casino Gambling, a known front for the organized crime and drug mobs. The Shah's lawyer is none other than Roy Cohn of McCarthy witchhunt

for the Galante and Gambino crime families and for the crime-connected *Our Town* newspaper, which is currently running an upfront assassination effort against U.S. Labor Party Chairman Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

According to Mexican sources, the Shah has recently begun to work with the Italian aristocratic Pallavicini family, and is closely tied to the deposed Royal House of Italy, the House of Savoy. Among the Pallavicini's current activities are deployment of environmentalist and terrorist bands. One of their employees, sources report, is the Shah's bodyguard, Robert Armao.

police, to head his government. Rahimi, too, is known for his manic-depressive fits and is prone to heavy-handed tactics to suppress his opposition. A few weeks ago Rahimi attempted a power play against Chief of Staff General Farbod and Defense Minister Riahi, both of whom are reportedly becoming wary of Khomeini. Rahimi was subsequently dismissed, but has maintained a close relationship with Khomeini.

Dissent in the ranks

General Rahimi is generally distrusted and disliked by

the remaining military brass inside of Iran and would certainly be unable to rally the support of the fragmented and inactive 200,000 remaining troops of the imperial army.

Shortly after Bakhtiar's July 31 Paris press conference, two separate incidents took place in Iran indicating the anti-Khomeini sentiment within military circles. First, there was a revolt of army troops at an installation south of Teheran against the policies of the Ayatollah Khomeini and his executions of hundreds of military figures. Second, following a revolutionary committee execution of two military officers in Tabriz in the northern province of Azerbaijan, military figures called for a

revolutionary committee, promptly driving him out of the area. At the same time the military in Tabriz announced that their brothers in Kurdistan would not intervene to halt the revolt in Kurdistan.

According to one Iranian source:

"The military will not move on Khomeini's orders. Even when the Shah was in power they did not want to tangle with the Kurds, who are mountain fighters and armed to the teeth. Pilots flying bombing missions into Kurdistan are not dropping bombs on their assigned cities but on barren fields. Khomeini will never marshal mass forces into Kurdistan."

Iranian sources say that Khomeini's sudden proclamation that he is now fully in charge of Iran's armed forces is most likely to only further alienate his Islamic regime from the military. The *New York Times* reported Aug. 22 that the military is unhappy with Khomeini's provocations in Kurdistan and is reluctant to get involved. Most of the fighting in the region has been between Khomeini's revolutionary guard and Kurdish rebels.

Red carpet for showdown

Iran's chaos will quickly escalate into civil war unless the fragmented opposition in Iran can quickly come together and make a strong public showing against Khomeini. In particular this means that the second- and third-level Ayatollahs in the country must overcome considerable ideological differences and unite publicly around this task. Ayatollah Shariatmadari, an arch-conservative, is known to be supporting Bakhtiar, and has the strong backing of the Azerbaijanis as well as sections of Teheran and the Khorastan province. Ayatollah Taleghani, less powerful than Shariatmadari, is much more left leaning with strong support among the National Democratic Front, the Mujahedeen, and the Fedayeen, as well as the Iranian workers—notably in the oil-producing region.

The greatest problem facing the opposition is a

Soviet press issues first attack on Khomeini

Following the forceful closing of the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) offices and newspaper last week, the Soviet Party newspaper Pravda opened up its first strong attacks on the Khomeini regime. Pravda of Aug. 22 attacked the newspaper of Khomeini's Islamic Republican Party for inciting a Muslim insurrection against Moscow's ally, Afghanistani president Taraki.

In the same issue, Pravda writer M. Sidorov wrote that "The Iranian press is also full of other lies concerning the nationalities policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union within the U.S.S.R. itself." This Pravda attack addresses the open effort Khomeini is presently running throughout the Mideast region using various Muslim tribal groupings against both pro-Soviet governments such as Iraq and Syria, and the Soviet Union itself through various ethnic minorities living on the 1,500-mile border Iran shares with the U.S.S.R.

serious vacuum of leadership. While Bakhtiar rallies considerable support, he is out of the country. Moreover, recently his reputation has been marred by reports of contact between Bakhtiar and the Pahlavi dynasty, particularly, the Shah's notorious and corrupt sister, Princess Ashraf, who moved to Paris shortly after Bakhtiar began his public bid for power in Iran. Informed sources indicate that Ashraf and the Shah's family have been "hanging on to Bakhtiar" hoping to use him to reinstall the monarchy through the Crown Prince.

Inside Iran, Matin-Daftari is the most well-respected opposition leader but he has now been forced underground by Khomeini's thugs. He is rumored to have fled Iran and to be in Rome.

If the opposition is not able to rapidly overcome internal differences and make a unified showing against Khomeini, civil war is unanimously predicted by both Iranian and American Iran watchers. Such a development is precisely what the geopoliticians in the U.S. National Security Council who brought Khomeini to Iran, the City of London, and Israeli intelligence are counting on.

In this situation, numerous British agents of influence maintain ongoing contact with the Shah, who still possesses hopes of restoring his Pahlavi dynasty to Iran.

—Judith Wyer