

A study in contrast: Baghdad and Teheran state their war aims

What Iraq sees as its political aim in the current conflict with Iran was said during an Oct. 4 press conference by Iraqi foreign minister Saadoun Hammadi at the United Nations in New York.

In response to a question from an *EIR* correspondent, Hammadi stressed that Iraq was preserving the sovereign nation-state against the incursions of Ayatollah Khomeini's movement.

"We are a country," Hammadi said. "The world is made up of nation-states. The political system of each country must be a matter of its own choice. Each country should be free to shape its own future. Mr. Khomeini, however, believes in world Muslim revolution. In the name of Islam, he believes he has the right to carry out an aggressive policy, a policy of expansion. Instead, we believe that the system of Iran must be left to the nation of Iran and that of Iraq to the nation of Iraq."

Although the most concise statement of this central aspect of the war to date, Hammadi's comments were completely blacked out from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and every other self-professed newspaper of record in the United States.

Hammadi's comments elaborated in the speech made Sept. 17 by Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in which the Iraqi leader explained the reasons behind Iraq's abrogation of its 1975 border treaty with Iran.

Speaking before a special session of the Iraqi assembly, Hussein declared: "We say before you, before the Arab nation, and before the entire world, that we have unmasked the false face by which the ruling circle in Iran came to power. This clique has falsely used the face of religion to expand at the expense of the Arab sovereignty and the nobler Arab interests. This clique has falsely used the face of religion to foment sedition and division among the nation's ranks despite the difficult circumstances through which the Arab nation is passing. . . ."

Hussein then made a gibe at Iran's pretensions to represent the interests of the Arab world: "The clique in Iran is using the face of religion to flame fanaticism, resentment, and division among the people of the area to serve the designs of world Zionism, whether this clique realizes it or not."

The sovereignty of the nation-state and its extension into the realm of military strategy have been features of statements made by Hammadi throughout October.

In an Oct. 4 speech to the United Nations, Hammadi declared:

Iraq has been and will continue to be one of the most committed countries to the nonaligned policy, which is based on the principles of nonintervention in domestic affairs, respect for the national sovereignty of all countries, and concern for the world's peace and security. In addition, our foreign policy permits no indulgence whatsoever concerning the independence of Iraq and the Arab countries, their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and intervention in their affairs by any party under any pretext or cover.

. . . Any disruption in the bases of equality of relations among countries will certainly harm the rights of sovereignty of one of the parties. To prevent such a phenomenon—which frequently has led to tension and crises—it is inevitable that international cooperation be based on rules whose objectives are to realize mutual interests within the framework of respect for sovereignty and noninterference in others' domestic affairs. This is particularly true when applied to neighboring countries. Geographic reality imposes on these countries the need to remain committed to the good-neighbor policy. . . .

From this rostrum, Iraq would like to stress several points which we have already frequently declared:

1. Iraq was not responsible for the course of events in its armed conflict with Iran. The ruling authority in Iraq is held responsible for this.
2. Iraq is defending its legitimate rights of sovereignty, honor, and dignity. It is prepared to make all the necessary sacrifices to safeguard these values.
3. Iran should realize that we will never relinquish the Arab nation's interest in and right to lead a peaceful and prosperous life. We will repulse any attempt to interfere in our affairs, sovereignty, and pan-Arab interests.
4. Iraq realizes fully the importance of safeguarding

international peace and security and the world's economic interests, particularly those pertaining to the flow of oil. We will do our utmost to prevent the ruling authorities in Iran from adversely affecting those interests. . . .

From the standpoint of his differentiation of the attitudes of Iran and Iraq, Hammadi has evaluated the prospects faced by each in the war. In an interview in the Oct. 13-19 Paris An-Nahar al-'Arabi wa ad-Duwali, Hammadi commented on reports that the U.S. would send spare-parts reinforcements to Iran with the following comment: "Spare parts do not change the course of wars. War is an army, arms and materiel, domestic morale, government, a united leadership and a plan of action, as well as far-sightedness, diplomacy, politics, international relations and internal cohesion. Therefore spare parts absolutely do not change the course of war."

The most comprehensive elaboration of the Iraqi viewpoint was made by Hammadi in an Oct. 16 speech before the United Nations Security Council. In this speech Hammadi presented an extensive dossier documenting exactly how Iraq's nation-state sovereignty was being violated by Iranian actions.

We have been Iran's neighbors for a long time. We share cultural, religious, and humanitarian ties with the people of Iran. We have long been convinced that the policies and practices of the successive Iranian regimes clearly represent territorial expansion. I am not going to bore the council with detailed historical examples, as this is neither the time nor the place for such details. I will only recall a fact from recent history—one that invites ridicule. We witnessed the dreams of the Shah of Iran and his desire to impose his power and control not only over the Arab Gulf region but over the Indian Ocean as well. All of us can now see Iranian president Bani-Sadr announcing that there are no borders between Muslim countries. This announcement does not reflect a policy of freedom and open doors among the Islamic states, for the Iranian government claims as its own several Islamic states, such as Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, and the capital of my country. . . .

[In late 1979], Khomeini unmasked his real intentions for the Islamic revolution when he decided to export it to Iraq and the Gulf area. Sabotage and terrorist operations began in our country, forcing us to take the necessary measures to protect our internal security. . . .

All of these actions were coupled with an information campaign of a religious fanaticism never before witnessed in the region. Indeed, Iraq was not the only theater for these operations. Similar operations were carried out in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE. . . .

Khomeini's plan for the so-called Islamic revolution was intended to disturb the region by inciting racist

religious hostilities. We in Iraq reject such a reactionary way of thinking. Our trend is a secular one, which does not mix religious and government affairs. Revolutions cannot be imposed from the outside against the masses' free will. This obliged us to confront Khomeini's theories and practices in defense of our nation, our prosperity, and our independence. . . .

I would like here to repeat some of the statements that top-level Iranian officials have made against Iraq and the Arab countries. In a speech made on behalf of his father on 21 March 1980, Khomeini's son said: We must exert maximum efforts to export our revolution to other world countries and must give up the idea of keeping the revolution within our borders. On 8 March 1980, Iranian foreign minister Ghotbzadeh said that his government had decided to topple the Iraqi government. In an interview with *An-Nahar al-'Arabi wa ad-Duwali* magazine, issue no. 151, dated 24 March 1980, Iranian president Bani-Sadr said that Iran would neither relinquish nor return the three Arab islands which Iran had occupied by force in 1971, and that Arab countries, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are not independent countries. On 19 June 1980, *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* quoted Khomeini as saying that the Iraqi people are duty bound to liberate themselves from the enemy's claws. The Iraqi people and army are duty bound to rise against this non-Islamic party in Iraq. In an interview on Monte Carlo radio dated 30 June, Ghotbzadeh rejected the idea that the Arabs have the right to regain the three islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb, as well as the Gulf, because, as Ghotbzadeh says, all countries in the Gulf are historically part of Iranian territory. In an interview with *al-Khalij* paper on 1 May 1980, in reply to a question on whether he considered Khomeini's statement to the effect that if Iraq pursues its present course, he would leave for Baghdad to liberate the Iraqi people to be interference in Iraq's domestic affairs, Ghotbzadeh replied: This cannot be considered interference in Iraqi affairs, because to us the Islamic nation is one and Imam Khomeini is our religious leader and that of the Iraqi and other Muslim peoples. Khomeini feels he has the same responsibility to Iraq as that he has to Iran. . . .

We are ready to offer all necessary sacrifices to safeguard our legitimate rights and vital interests. Iraq has expressed its anxiety in regard to the world's economic interests, which might be adversely affected by these events. Allow me to point out that Iraq is determined to safeguard other states' economic interests as best it can. Therefore, any attempt to internationalize the nature of the problem will lead to further foreign intervention in this part of the world, which we sincerely wish to keep outside the scope of influence and rivalry of the great powers, for the sake of international peace and security and of the world's economic prosperity. . . .

Iraqi charges confirmed

A leading ideologue in Iran, Hassan Ayat of the dominant Islamic Republican Party, has confirmed the substance of Iraq's charge that the Khomeini regime is determined to spread Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Arab world.

In an Oct. 19 interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, Ayat stated: "The war with Iraq has been a positive event: not only because it will permit us to resolve certain internal problems, but also because it will tend to cause a settling of accounts with the U.S.-allied regimes in the region. It is an excellent opportunity to export the Islamic revolution."

Ayat then portrayed the internal political chaos and factional in-fighting that has characterized Iran for the past weeks as a positive event in the furtherance of these "export the revolution" ends: "On the contrary, the struggles and the purges have strengthened us. The war will strengthen us further. To begin with, it has allowed us [the hard-line clergy—ed.] to take control of the armed forces."

As Ayat's statements indicate, Iran is trying to use the war to undermine the nation-states of the Arab-Islamic world and to bring about the purification of its own internal revolution, in a manner reminiscent of the 1960s Chinese Cultural Revolution and the mid-1970s events in Cambodia. This is the mentality behind the repeated exhortations on Teheran radio for Iran's citizens to seek "martyrdom" by engaging in "human wave" street-fighting tactics against Iraq's advancing armed forces.

The mentality involved on Iran's side was best summed up by Ayatollah Khomeini, in an Oct. 21 statement broadcast over Radio Teheran. According to the Teheran source, Khomeini had been challenged by a delegation of Islamic ambassadors about the negative consequences Iran was facing because of its isolation in the world diplomatic and political arena. Khomeini responded: "Actually we welcome this sort of isolation with open arms, for we want to be isolated. As long as the hands of the superpowers and the other powers are not cut short, we cannot do what we want. We must become isolated in order to become independent, we must become isolated forever. We have no fear at all of political, economic, and social boycotts."

Neither of these statements were reported in the self-professed American newspapers of record, since they portrayed too unambiguously the nature of the regime that the Carter administration has been so busily arranging a geopolitical deal with. Iraq's media, by contrast, has had no such inhibitions and has zeroed directly in on the Iranian leadership's state of mind.

From an Oct. 11 radio broadcast by Baghdad's Voice of the Masses:

Khomeini is an old man. He is so senile that his brain cells are no longer able to distinguish between good and bad, goodness and evil, injustice and justice, and between the flock and the herd. His senility has driven the Iranian peoples and the country to internecine fighting, destruction, and ruination. To Khomeini, singing and music are taboo; imported meat and poultry are taboo; television and the camera are taboo; education and schools are taboo. To Khomeini everything is banned. The man is senile. He cannot distinguish between victory and defeat. . . . He is a senile old man, so please excuse him.

On Oct. 17, Baghdad Domestic Service commented on the odd alliance between the U.S. and Iran and its consequences for the Iranian people:

There is no doubt that the Teheran government is stricken with a fever, reflected in statements that are so funny that one must pity Iran's peoples, who have happened to come under the mercy of ignorant mentalities, good at nothing except lying, falsifying, and obliterating facts.

One who follows the series of eccentric statements blared out every now and then from this or that Khomeini official will realize that Bani-Sadr, Khalkhali, Rajai, Rafsanjani, and others are stricken with Khomeini fits that make them hallucinate, talk nonsense, and direct the Persian propaganda trumpets in the same direction.

What is strange about these propaganda organs is that they attack the United States and curse the U.S. officials at the same time that Rajai throws himself in the lap of President Carter and Secretary of State Muskie. The Persian planes that are striking residential areas in Iraq are of U.S. manufacture. The tanks that the Persians left behind when they took to their heels are of U.S. manufacture. The ammunition used to fill the barrels of the Persian guns is of U.S. manufacture. Nevertheless, Teheran radio attacks the United States. Regardless of the reason, the Iranian peoples are the victims, the ones who are meant to be deceived and to keep silent about all of the rash acts carried out by the Qom and Teheran gangs. These people are meant to be offended and enslaved.

Now is the time of the U.S. hostage card. The Persian propaganda trumpets have to find a reasonable cover to gag mouths of the subdued Iranian peoples. Will they say the heads of the hostages in return for spare parts, ammunition, and new weapons? What sort of haggling, dirty game, and disgraceful role is being placed by the Persian propaganda trumpets? What future will face the peoples of Iran, who are afflicted by a handful of ignorant heretics, enemies of humanity.