

decisions the Shah will make regarding both a reduction of the power of the monarchy under the new government, and who will control the military. Whether the Shah decides to take a brief leave of absence from Iran in order to appease the restive Iranian population and give Baktiar a chance to begin to rebuild his nation will indicate the degree of agreement on these key issues.

#### The military factor

The Soviet press has registered numerous warnings over the past week of a right-wing military coup in Iran. Such concern on the part of Moscow and numerous French sources indicates a growing awareness of Britain's determination to back such a coup and maintain the sizeable leverage it has wielded for centuries in Iran through rightwing oligarchical interests. A swing to the right could come in one of two ways. Either through a coup conducted by little known officers, as one Iranian suggested perhaps an army artillery commander, or from a clique of prominent top generals such as the Administrator of Martial Law, General Oviessi, and the Commander of the Air Force, General Rabii. Oviessi is known to work closely with U.S. Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi, who in turn has been attacked by Soviet press sources as a close ally of leading cold war circles in the U.S. — a reference to Zahedi's well publicized friendship with Henry Kissinger. Zahedi has also become a confidant of National Security Council Director Zbigniew Brzezinski, who has been supporting continued reign for the Shah backed by a right-wing solution.

According to the Dec. 24 *New York Times*, Zahedi, Oviessi, and other generals are demanding that the Shah not leave Iran under any circumstances, that Zahedi be included in a new cabinet, and that Oviessi become the Chief of Staff, demands which Baktiar could never accept in his efforts to form a government with members of the opposition. Informed sources agree that if some agreement is not reached between the right and the moderate left leaning opposition over the sensitive issue of who will control the military, then the chance of a split within the generals is likely followed by civil war. For this reason Baktiar has stated his willingness to offer the Shah continued control over the armed forces, but has insisted that a highly respected general who has respect from the opposition, General Djam, become the Chief of Staff. Djam, who has been serving as Iranian Ambassador to Spain, just returned to Iran — suggesting his possible participation in a new government.

#### Splitting the opposition

State Department sources last week stressed that if a possible solution between the right and left wings could be reached around the return of General Djam, Iran may be on its way to recovery. The more intransigent elements of the opposition associated with exiled Shiite leader Ayatollah Khomeiny and his associate Karim Sanjabi, the leader of the National Front, have been unwilling to accept Baktiar's proposal that the Shah maintain control over the military, even considering that such a concession was vital to maintaining the solidity of the armed forces. As a result

### Baktiar: 'We will try to put the country back on its feet'

*The following is a translation of excerpts of an interview with Iranian Prime Minister-designate Shapur Baktiar which appeared in the Jan. 2 Le Figaro. In response to a question concerning his chances of forming a new government in Iran, Baktiar replied smiling:*

**Baktiar:** When, in 1940, Charles de Gaulle climbed into his modest plane to go to London, he was not convinced of success either! . . . I still need a few days to form my government. It will be a social-democratic government, of course, and all its members will be perfectly clean, irreproachable from the standpoint of corruption. At the Defense Ministry for example, I will have General Djam (graduate of the French military academy Saint-Cyr, husband of Princess Shams, the Shah's sister — ed). He is respected by everyone. Even before I present my team, the military censorship will be lifted and the newspapers will be allowed to reappear.

As soon as the Assembly grants me its con-

fidence, His Majesty will make a statement in which he officially defines the limits of his power, this by virtue of the Constitution which wants the Sovereign to reign but not to govern. Then the Shah will designate a regency council and will be able to take a few weeks of vacation in a foreign country. . . . If Karim Sanjabi, who just excluded me in a somewhat ridiculous fashion from the National Front, accepts this post as President of the regency council, the place awaits him. Otherwise, we will find someone else. And then we will try to put the country back on its feet.

*Q: But what will Khomeiny's attitude be?*

**Baktiar:** I have contacts with him, and I myself went to see the religious leaders of Qom who listened to me with interest.

*Q: Are you an optimist?*

**Baktiar:** When a country is in chaos, people have to sacrifice themselves in order to try something. So I am sacrificing myself.