The Clerical Establishment in Iran

Nikola B. Schahgaldian

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This study analyzes the evolution of the Shia clerical establishment in the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979, and assesses the prospects for the durability of the current regime. It examines the nature, role, modus operandi, and sources of various clerical power centers; considers major issues of factional discord; and identifies the probable domestic and foreign policy directions of the clerical elite in the post-Khomeyni era. The study also includes detailed analyses of the composition, hierarchy, and organization of this establishment and scrutinizes the present status and possible future political role of clerical factions. The report is based in part on interviews with informed Iranians and others, including many Shia clerics and other religious functionaries, and supplemented by analysis of open-source literature in local and Western languages. The author suggests that, though a major change in Iran's position vis-a-vis the United States is unlikely in the immediate post-Khomeyni period, the United States should strive to establish a working relationship with Iran. Such a relationship is desirable because it might prevent Iran from sliding into the Soviet orbit and discourage it from overtaking the other Persian Gulf states, and because Iran is the most important Persian Gulf state from the standpoint of population, economic and military power, and geo-strategic location.

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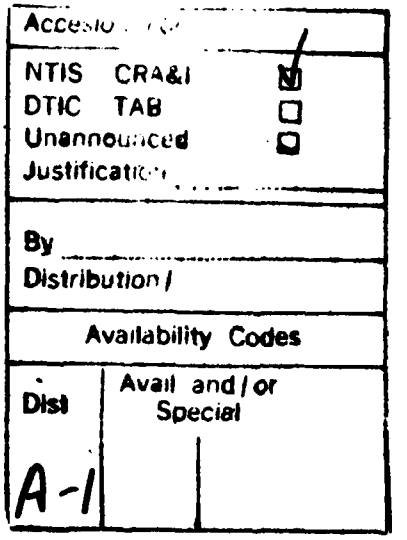

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PREFACE

This study analyzes the evolution of the Shia clerical establishment in the Islamic Republic of Iran since its establishment in 1979 and assesses the prospects for the durability of the current regime. It examines the nature, role, modus operandi, and sources of various clerical power centers; examines major issues of factional discord; and identifies the probable domestic and foreign policy directions of the clerical elite in the post-Khomeyni era. The study also includes detailed analyses of the composition, hierarchy, and organization of this establishment and scrutinizes the present status and possible future political role of clerical factions. The implications of these developments for U.S. policy in Iran and the Persian Gulf region are also discussed.

The findings of this study are based in part on interviews with informed Iranians and others, including many Shia clerics and other religious functionaries. The interview data were supplemented by in-depth analysis of open source literature in local and Western languages. The research and interviews were conducted through March 1988.

This study was sponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy under RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a Federally Funded Research and Development Center supported by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It was conducted as part of RAND's research program on International Security and Defense Policy. The findings of this report should be of interest to Middle East specialists and policy analysts concerned with social and political developments in Iran and in Southwest Asia.

This report was completed just before the death of Ayatollah Khomeyni on June 3, 1989. Information about Iran's current internal political affairs and status of Khomeyni's probable successors is summarized in the Epilogue, following the concluding section.

SUMMARY

The Iranian government, which is controlled by a network of Shia clerics led by Ayatollah Khomeyni, has recently lost much of its credibility among its own people. It has failed to achieve a meaningful military victory against Iraq or to improve social and economic conditions at home; millions of villagers have migrated to cities; there are four million unemployed people and three million war-stricken refugees; and religious and political factionalism abounds. These problems have raised doubts about the stability of the regime and anxieties about possible chaos after Khomeyni's death. The maneuverings of the major clerical factions seem especially threatening to political stability, as these groups prepare for a possible struggle for power when Khomeyni dies. Should the government fall into paralysis or anarchy, U.S. security interests in Iran and the surrounding region would be affected.

Although clerical rivalries constantly disrupt Iran's internal situation, it is possible to discern consistent trends in the clerical establishment. This study examines the composition and beliefs of the clerical network, their internal disputes, their modus operandi, and the evolution of specific clerical factions in the past ten years. The information was collected from a wide range of Persian and Western language sources, such as underground political and religious pamphlets, official government publications, newspapers, and radio broadcasts, and from interviews with Iranian nationals living outside the country and representing different ages, educational levels, occupations, political views, ethnic groups, religious preferences, and dates of emigration from Iran. The analysis based on this broad database suggests that despite numerous factions within the clerical regime, the government is fairly stable and will probably remain so while Khomeyni is alive. When Khomeyni dies, Iran may experience considerable internal instability, but it is unlikely to sink into the chaos and political anarchy that characterized the period immediately following the 1979 revolution.

Clerical leaders frequently disagree on such issues as relations with Western countries or women's legal equality with men. Yet these radical differences of attitude cannot be consistently identified with specific factions. Unlike Western political groups, which tend to be labelled as "moderate," "liberal," or "rightist," Iranian political factions often overlap, individuals may switch allegiances, and clerics may speak in one way and act in another. Furthermore, clerics are more likely to gain power through their personal connections than through their political principles.

The struggles center on Khomeyni's succession, personal disagreements, and competition between court clerics ("insiders") and independent clerics ("outsiders").

The 1979 constitution provides for a Council of Experts to choose a successor to the supreme spiritual-political leader (faghih), but it defines the process in vague terms. As a result, the Council has been divided in its choice.

Clerics often fight over personal or financial interests. Many government agencies perform overlapping functions and often find themselves competing for money and specific missions. In addition, the day-to-day influence of many clerical officials does not necessarily correspond to their positions, but on their ties with leading clerics. Factions thus form on the unstable basis of personality.

Insiders are an integral part of the government bureaucracy, while outsiders work outside the formal government apparatus in religious, social service, economic, and commercial organizations, many of whose functions duplicate those of the government agencies. Insiders attempt to integrate outsider organizations into the state apparatus, and outsiders struggle to keep their autonomy. The factions usually break up once the specific issue is resolved. Thus, they represent a disruptive but not threatening force to clerical stability.

Crossing through these three types of factions are three political coalitions of conservatives, extremists, and pragmatists. While these groups are constantly changing and often overlap, they retain broadly distinguishable characteristics:

Conservatives consider the Islamic Republic well entrenched and argue that the regime should routinize its political processes, abandon revolutionary excesses, address the country's shortcomings, pay greater attention to the psychological needs of the people, and allow exiles to come home. Many conservatives oppose Communist ideology and call for a freer market economy, with less economic intervention from the government and a greater role for merchants in foreign trade.

Extremists such as Prime Minister Musavi favor a centralized economy, nationalization of foreign trade, and radical land reform. Many of the younger members of the group are former revolutionary activists who see politics in terms of "oppressor" and "oppressed" and Islam as a revolutionary ideology that should be spread abroad.

Pragmatists include clerics who, rather than identify with a set ideology, routinely shift their political stands according to their followers' wishes; and those who remain aloof from factions and cooperate with whichever political force is currently dominant. The latter type is most clearly evident in Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who avoids political rivalries and cultivates friends across factions.

Cutting across these factions are nationalist, ultra-conservative religious, pragmatist, paramilitary, and economic interest groups. These groups are defined less by issue-oriented disagreements than by personal alliances.

The clerical government is structurally quite strong. The faghih is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and has the power to approve any presidential candidate, dismiss an elected president, and appoint the highest judicial authorities. Below the faghih, power is diffused among the presidency, the parliament, council of ministers, the judiciary, and several other structures. These institutions operate autonomously but are also tied together by a system of checks and balances. The object of these institutions is to insure the Shia clergy's continued control of the state.

Khomeyni's leadership style had also been a stabilizing force. He maintained his prestige by giving open-ended instructions and leaving day-to-day management of state affairs to his close subordinates; in a crisis, he usually deflected public blame away from himself onto other officials. Urging unity among the factions, he remained aloof from major political controversies and took sides only when issues got deadlocked. Because clerics are encouraged to emulate this style, Khomeyni's managerial style may offer support to the clerical establishment in the future.

In spite of their disagreements, most clerics share sufficient common views to unify their ruling establishment and to permit them to unite against their common enemies. They generally agree on the following points:

1. It is the clergy's right and religious duty to hold political office. Secularist forces are the greatest danger to the current regime and should be eliminated.
2. Only the faghih can act as the supreme leader, directing all government operations as well as the lives of all Shias.
3. Iranian society needs to be transformed by a nonviolent moral revolution, which will replace corrupt secular values with Islamic principles, and the middle-class lifestyle with strict Islamic standards of public behavior and male-female relations.
4. The government should avoid close relations with either the United States or the Soviet Union.
5. The clerical establishment should support Islamic liberation movements in other countries and spread the Iranian revolution to the rest of the Muslim world.

6. Iran should work toward economic self-sufficiency by giving priority to agricultural development and deemphasizing consumer production.

A three-tiered hierarchy allows the clerical system to operate efficiently and flexibly:

1. The first tier consists of a very few grand ayatollahs, religious scholars who interpret religious law. Immediately below them are the "ordinary" ayatollahs, who traditionally have devoted their careers to studying and teaching, but who lately occupy influential government positions.
2. At the second tier are clerics carrying honorific titles, who interpret the ideas of the senior ayatollahs and often act as the liaison between the regime and the public. They participate actively in local government.
3. The third tier, theological seminary students, are seen as the future hope of the regime. Many of them are sent on assignments to spread the regime's ideas throughout the country. Although regime officials work to ensure their political loyalty, some of the high-level clerics try to recruit students to their factional causes.

A feeling of personal solidarity among clerics also contributes to the stability of their rule. As individuals, the clerics share important experiences: family ties, years of contact in the religious schools, underground opposition to the Shah's regime, and often prison or internal exile. These shared experiences have not only brought about close personal friendships, but have also acquainted the clergy with one another's strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, and alliances—knowledge that makes their rivalries easier to manage.

Another stabilizing element is the clerics' use of similar political tactics:

1. Keeping internal matters secret from laymen is seen as essential to preserving the clerical system, while mutually protective silence among clerics lessens strife within their own ranks.
2. Clerics mislead opponents about their beliefs whenever they perceive that uttering the truth would endanger them. This tactic sometimes creates distrust between clerics, but it can be practiced collectively against a common opponent and thus increase the group's solidarity.
3. Aloofness, a silent, noncommittal posture taken during a crisis, permits the cleric to gain time to plan his next move or

to avoid responsibility for making a decision. This tactic can reduce tension during factional struggles, but it can also increase their duration.

4. The propaganda surrounding Khomeyni emphasizes his personality as a wise and pious leader, dedicated to the masses. The clerics' shared devotion to Khomeyni has also unified them as a group.
5. "Justice," a strategy that assumes that a just government should protect citizens against chaos, even by harsh methods, has allowed the clerical network to unite its followers against common adversaries.
6. Xenophobia, traditionally to most foreigners, more recently the United States, unites the establishment against a common enemy.
7. Ideological indoctrination, combined with conformity and political repression, mobilizes the masses and crushes all resistance, making it likely that the regime will continue in power.

All these methods have a long tradition in Iran, are sanctioned in the Shia religion, and are therefore agreeable to the thinking and lifestyles of the Shia Iranians.

The Islamic regime is expected to survive Khomeyni's death, but the successor regime, struggling to consolidate itself, will initially need to be very cautious in its policies, suggesting that a major change in Iran's relationship with the United States is unlikely in the immediate post-Khomeyni period.

Nevertheless, the United States should strive to reestablish a working relationship with Iran to prevent it from sliding into the Soviet orbit; to discourage it from trying to overtake the other Persian Gulf states; and because Iran is the most important Persian Gulf state from the standpoint of population, economic and military power, and geostrategic location. Specifically, the United States should adopt the following policies:

1. Remain neutral in the Iran-Iraq conflict. From Iran's standpoint, neither superpower can have good relations with both Iran and Iraq.
2. Be open to opportunities for better relations with Iran, possibly through the intermediation of third parties, such as Algeria and Pakistan.
3. Avoid confrontational force or rhetoric.
4. Avoid military action against Iranian territory.

5. Avoid publicly supporting any particular Iranian emigre group. However, if an opposition force gains strength within Iran, the United States should enter into communication with it to assess its response to U.S. security concerns.
6. Encourage future resumption of ties by reaffirming U.S. support for Iran's territorial integrity and pledging to help its postwar reconstruction efforts.
7. To strengthen Western influence in Iran and limit Soviet influence, encourage economic, cultural, educational, and scientific ties between Iran and Japan, Switzerland, China, and some of the NATO countries.

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Iran has been facing growing domestic turmoil since 1986, while the crises of religious fundamentalism, political legitimacy, and socio-economic change have convulsed their ruling clerical elite. Despite heavy human losses and economic costs, the Islamic Republic failed to achieve any meaningful military victory against Iraq. Although they continue to keep the economy going, the clerics are clearly unable to bring about the long-awaited social and economic improvements they have repeatedly promised the population. Moreover, millions of villagers continue to rush to cities, and problems unleashed by the presence of some four million unemployed people together with three million war-stricken internal refugees remain unresolved.

These and many other factors have damaged the ruling establishment's credibility and weakened its popularity among broad sectors of the Iranian population. Unable to introduce the needed reforms, many senior clerics have increased the temperature of their public pronouncements instead in the apparent hope of lowering the temperature in the streets. In the absence of concrete benefits, this attitude has further cooled the ardor of the urban poor and bazaar merchants, originally the backbone of the Islamic revolution in 1979.

Perhaps more important, such failures have begun to widen the existing religious, ideological, personal, and political rifts among various clerical power centers and their subordinate organizations. The ruling establishment is fearful that a division among leaders may soon become a division among supporters. Only Ayatollah Khomeyni's personal role has prevented open conflict among rival factions in the past few years.

In light of this situation many observers have concluded that in the immediate post-Khomeyni period, intraclerical rifts are likely to plunge various clerical power centers into bloody infighting, which would lead to domestic political paralysis or widespread chaos with direct policy implications for U.S. security interests in Iran and in the surrounding region. However, citing the broad institutionalization of many aspects of Islamic rule in the past nine years in Iran, many others have come to assert that, as in the past, the current regime will be able to meet potential challenges from both its nonclerical opposition groups and clerical rivals for the foreseeable future. These conflicting assertions require continual testing, because Iran's internal situation is constantly

changing, prompting many analysts to argue that current Iranian politics are too chaotic to permit meaningful forecasting beyond Khomeyni's departure or death.

This study examines the clerical establishment in terms of continuities and more or less stable patterns that are observable over an extended period. This research has identified prevailing trends and tendencies and sought to explain the reasons for their persistence. One basic assumption of this study is that to understand the present and the future role of clerics in Iranian politics, one must grasp the thought process and modus operandi of Shia clergy. The behavior of clerics in local Iranian political developments and their reactions to international events affecting Iran have not been characterized by a generic pattern of behavior; instead, they emanate from well-established religious foundations of historical experience and a consciously keen sense of their sacred duty in shaping the values and lives of the Iranian population.

This study has paid special attention to questions concerning the nature, beliefs, and characteristics of the Shia clerics, their sources of support, the ways in which the clerical subculture has interacted with everyday social and political life of Iranians, various issues of discord among clergymen and their civilian allies, and finally the origins, evolution, objectives, organization and leadership of various power centers in Iran.

Along with concentration on these and similar issues, this study also aims to investigate prospects for the future foreign and domestic directions of the clerical elite in the post-Khomeyni period.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Detailed and reliable knowledge of the clerical network in Iran is of primary importance for U.S. foreign policy interests in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region, and a better understanding of issues surrounding the internal workings of this establishment can contribute directly to government decisions, planning, and future assessments in many respects. Most American commentators have come to view the Islamic Republic of Iran as the outstanding example of the Islamic revival that has been sweeping the Muslim world over the past decade or so. Similarly, many more observers have come to appreciate that because of its geostrategic location, Iran would continue to be one of the most important countries in the region with respect to U.S. interests. This renewed interest in Iran, which since the resolution of the Iranian hostage crisis in January 1981 had fallen from the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, has resulted in the appearance of dozens of books and articles dealing with Iran in the past few years.

Most analysts have concentrated on either the theological and ideological bases of governmental systems in Iran, or on the formal and institutional aspects of the Islamic rule in that country. Others have dwelt on Iran's international behavior, its involvement in terrorism, the issue of the Iran-Iraq war, or on the "causes" of the 1979 revolution, resulting in a major gap in our knowledge of the modus operandi of the ruling clerical establishment. The scarcity of reliable sources, travel restrictions imposed by Tehran on foreign visitors, and the inaccessibility of firsthand information have compounded this shortcoming. The ruling clerics in Iran remain an enigma to Western observers and policymakers.

A few articles and monographs have shed some light on aspects of the subject, but vast areas remain uncovered. The works mentioned in the Bibliography are somewhat deceptive, as many of these are either too spotty or too general to be of much use. As a whole, they reflect more the demand for knowledge about the ruling clerical network than the increased supply of it, especially through the application of new research methods or utilization of new sources.

I have undertaken the task of assembling, analyzing, and synthesizing information and data that appear periodically in Persian language sources. These include the press organs of various legal and underground Iranian political groups, official government publications, semiofficial literature, declarations, and pamphlets published in Iran or distributed clandestinely in major Iranian urban centers. I have also examined numerous Persian language newspapers and journals published both inside and outside Iran by various opposition groups, together with official press organs of Iranian political parties, for information.

Although many sources were not invariably reliable, some of them contain surprisingly informative data on various aspects of clerical factions and their evolution or avenues of influence not found elsewhere. Specialized and even obscure religious publications put out by various Islamic educational, welfare, or theological institutions proved to be highly useful. Despite their wealth of relevant information, such local sources have usually been ignored and have consequently remained inadequately exploited in the United States. I was also able to utilize several private archives of brochures and pamphlets in Persian, together with various radio broadcast materials.

THE INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

To collect comprehensive and up-to-date information, and in addition to written primary sources, this study relied heavily on interviews with Iranian clerics of various ranks together with older, knowledgeable Iranians. Indeed, this project was undertaken only after a preliminary assessment gave assurance that RAND researchers would be able to establish access to potential interviewees.

At the beginning of the project a master list of approximately 90 potential interview subjects was prepared. It was limited to Iranian nationals currently living outside of the country, was composed of individuals who maintained personal or professional ties with their colleagues and families back in Iran, and who were otherwise in a position to have access to reliable sources of firsthand information. The main objection typically raised to such interviewing efforts is that the sample is politically biased, because a large percentage of these Iranians, whether secularists or religiously oriented, are opponents of the present Tehran regime in one way or another.

I was of course aware of the inherent limitations of this nature in our interview database; consequently I tried to minimize these problems in several ways. A fully balanced effort would ideally supplement our sample with interviews conducted inside Iran, including some with strong supporters of the clerical regime but in present circumstances, this approach was simply not feasible. To compensate for this shortcoming, I made a special effort to interview as wide a spectrum of political opinion as possible within the very large Iranian community that has come to reside outside Iran in the last decade.[1] Owing to the clerical regime's continuing crackdown on political opponents, this spectrum now ranges from entirely secular to deeply religious individuals and from rightist extremists to revolutionary leftists; these also include religious, regional, tribal, and ethnic groups with less clearly defined ideological preferences.

To the same end, the interview effort also sought a spread in clerical candidates' ranks, ages, educational level, and original dates of departure from Iran. I interviewed senior clergymen and former government officials, several of whom had been important political players, and young, low-ranked clerics who presented a much different but nonetheless

[1]The current number of Iranians who have left or have been forced to leave Iran since the 1979 revolution is undetermined. Estimates range from a low of one half million to over 3 million. Within this population group, I estimate the number of Shia clerics of various ranks, seminary students or ex-students, former religious officials, together with those whose immediate family includes at least one clergyman in Iran, does not surpass 15,000 people. There is reason to believe that of these about 300 are members of the Shia clergy.

valuable perspective on various developments. Both the high politics of the clerical establishment and the day-to-day experiences of life in a contemporary religious seminary, or an Islamic welfare foundation, were relevant to this research.

The degree of bias on the part of interviewees to a large extent also depends on the type of interview conducted. It has been my experience, not only in this study but in other interviewing efforts, that the most successful interviews are those tailored to the specific experience of the respondents, and where the subject is encouraged to give a strictly factual account of his own personal experiences. Obviously, if a seminary student is asked to speculate on questions about the succession struggle in the current regime, he may come up with wild and improbable interpretations. More mundane questions, for example, concerning living conditions in a theological school in Qom, or the ordinary functions of junior clerics in a village mosque, in general do not have obvious political importance and tend to elicit factual responses from those who were in a position to know.

Despite taking these and similar precautions, several interview subjects tried to use the opportunity provided by this study to present self-serving interpretations of various developments, especially in regard to their past activities. But again, an effort was made to elicit more than one version of major aspects of specific issues. By interviewing enough people at different levels, it was possible to distinguish more or less reliable views, and facts from opinions. Similarly, when interviewees were assured that they were not responding in a vacuum and that I had already solicited different answers from earlier respondents, many interviewees tended to become more forthright and objective in their statements.

Although I sought to approach some interview subjects through various Iranian emigre organizations that had assisted me early on in contacting Iranians in different interview projects, I located many more interviewees through personal contacts than I did through formal organizational networks. In other projects (e.g., among East European and Soviet emigres), it is often possible to advertise for interview candidates in emigre publications. But this and similar other approaches would be unthinkable in the case of Iranians in general, and with clerically related individuals in particular. As a whole, they will not open up to a stranger without a personal introduction, usually from some other Iranian. It was often necessary to secure multiple personal entry points into many well-known religious families or support groups of senior clergymen. However, once original contacts, which often required face-to-face communication, had been established, most interview subjects became very cooperative. A majority were very generous with their time and often quite frank in expressing their opinions.

Throughout the interview phase of this project, I faced the constant challenge posed by those interviewees who seemed to possess detailed information about some specific issues but little desire to share it with others. Moreover, many of the respondents tended to attribute complicated conspiratorial motives to otherwise straightforward political events. This tendency is understandable for several historical and cultural reasons, but it created problems for me because it affected both the substantive views expressed and the way interviewees deal with strangers. Several interview subjects were obviously fearful for their family members and relatives in Iran, when they were asked to give specific examples of some events; several others refused to give complete answers apparently because they were concerned about hurting their political chances if and when they returned to Iran. Still others, especially some of the middle-ranked clerics, refused to answer several specific questions presumably because they did not want to expose themselves to future criticism. In view of these difficulties, throughout the interview phase I was constantly aware that my own motives might be misinterpreted. I was therefore careful to be as straightforward as possible about my own purposes and the scholarly nature of this project.

In the course of this study I talked to over 100 people, mostly Iranians. But I conducted a total of 39 interviews, for as it turned out, it was neither possible nor even necessary for my purposes to interview all those appearing on our original master list. I tried to tape-record as many interviews as possible, but in most cases I was able to keep only handwritten notes. Except in a few cases, the interviews were conducted in Persian. These were of different lengths and quality, and many turned out to be quite substantial.

Of the total number of the interviews, 21 were conducted in the United States, eight in France, six in the United Kingdom, and four in Israel.[2] The overwhelming majority of respondents had left Iran between late 1983 and early 1988 and had settled in the above-mentioned countries more or less on a permanent basis. However, five interview subjects had gone back to Iran for short visits after their original departure dates from the country. In addition, the above sample included three people who resided permanently in Iran but who happened to be visiting the United States and France for medical and other personal reasons. Many of the interviews were conducted at the interviewee's residence or those of their friends and acquaintances; many other interviews, especially in European countries, were held in restaurants or hotels at the request of the individuals concerned.

[2]Our original list of interview candidates included about one dozen Iranian religious personalities who resided in Iraq. However, for a variety of reasons, a research field trip to that country was not feasible.

In the course of choosing the respondents I made a special effort to ascertain that our sample included both junior and higher-ranking clerics with varied educational levels and professional experiences. Those interviewed included one senior cleric with the religious title of *ayatollah*, seven middle level clergymen who carried the title of *hojatoleslam*, three junior preachers of *saqatoleslam* rank, one former *imam jomeh* or prayer leader whose religious rank I could not determine, and two *tollab* or seminary students. Of these clerics, seven were interviewed in various places in the United States, four in France, and the rest in England. In terms of educational background, this sub-group of our interviewees had invariably spent two to seven years of their lives in various religious seminaries studying and, in some cases, teaching Islamic theology and law; many of these people were full or part-time practitioners who derived their livelihood by performing religious services.

A second sub-group of interviewees consisted of six individuals who were born and raised in well-established religious families in Tehran and other provincial centers; they had also served as informal advisers, clerks, or secretaries to middle level clergymen, often from their own immediate families. Two of these also claimed to be *seyyeds* or male descendants of Prophet Mohammad. Except in one case, the rest of this group were interviewed in the United States.

A third category of our Iranian respondents consisted of 11 people who, either as former civil employees or private merchants, had spent considerable time in various capacities working with several clerically dominated educational, welfare, and trading organizations following the Iranian revolution of 1979. Although not formal members of the Shia clergy, many of these people also claimed to have come from religious families. Finally, our interview sample included eight Iranian local observers, journalists, educators, and businessmen who maintained close personal ties with others inside Iran; many of these visited that country on a regular basis and seemed to have access to reliable and up-to-date sources of information about developments in Iran. In addition to the above categories, in the course of this study, I was able to contact and exchange ideas about the subject with approximately two dozen American and foreign observers of Iranian politics.

STUDY ORGANIZATION

Section II begins with a brief discussion of the historical evolution and the institutional framework of the ruling clerical establishment. It examines the nature and sources of clerical power in contemporary Iran, numbers, composition, hierarchy, and beliefs of the clergy. The

section also details several aspects of clerical culture and their modus operandi.

Section III concentrates on various factional struggles and internal divisions among clerical groups and discusses their origins, evolution, and present significance. This section also analyzes various power centers and factional groups operating in Iran and traces their origins, internal organization, leadership objectives, and ties to others; the present status and future prospects of many of these groups are also discussed in this section. The last section analyzes the present and probable future political situation in Iran, discusses some implications of the current succession struggle being waged in Tehran, summarizes the study's major conclusions, and discusses implications of our research findings for U.S. policy. The appendix supplies a chronology of events for the past ten years, tracks major internal developments, and includes details of certain happenings in the Iranian scene not otherwise covered in the main body of this study. A selected bibliography follows for further reference.

II. THE RULING CLERICAL NETWORK

OVERVIEW

The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic regime in that country represent a new pattern of political power and social structure in the modern history of the Middle East. Since then, Iran has produced more surprises than most countries do in many decades. Even the original seizure of political power in 1979 seemed unique. Typically, regime changes in contemporary Middle East, as well as in many other Third World regions, are carried out by small groups of professional soldiers who attempt to mobilize popular support for the new rulers and their ideology only after their takeover of political power is complete.[1] The Iranian case was strikingly different: Although the revolutionary upheaval was a multi-class phenomenon, it was primarily the Shia religious leaders and Islamic scholars, rather than officers, who directed and then took control of the movement. In fact, the revolution was in part directed against the officer corps. Similarly, those who came to power enjoyed mass support in advance of their takeover; and instead of claiming credit for introducing a new revolutionary ideology, the religious elite glorified its passionate devotion and return to seventh-century Islam.

The early months of 1979 were the beginning of a classic phenomenon. The temporary unity of revolutionaries, formed around the common goal of overthrowing the monarchy, exploded under the pressure of forces that reflected conflicting interests and political aspirations. The radicals and leftists called for the complete transformation of society along Marxist lines; the middle class liberals and nationalists advocated parliamentary rule, social democracy, and maintenance of a liberal economy; Khomeyni and his clerical supporters, however, pressed for his vision of an Islamic state based on Shia religious and moral values, laws and perceptions; the ethnic minorities demanded self-determination; and the rest of the revolutionaries were divided among rightist, leftist, and centrist factions, each usually under the patronage of an ayatollah of like persuasion.

The social upheaval, economic collapse, and political anarchy that descended on the country in the immediate post-revolutionary period naturally exacerbated the ensuing struggles for power. The religious

[1]The role of the military in social and political life of modern Middle Eastern states are best discussed in Be'eri, 1970; Fisher, 1969; and Hurewitz, 1969.

leadership rapidly moved itself to positions of political control. In doing so, the Shia clerical establishment, headed by Khomeyni, came to exercise a political role unprecedented since the year 1501, when Ismail, the leader of another Shia religious order, founded the Safavid dynasty and declared Shiism as the state religion of Iran.[2] At present, many members of this establishment are involved in directing the day-to-day business of running a government and of directing a society. In the course of this process, the clerics have placed themselves in an unenviable position of responsibility for solving the sociopolitical, economic, and military problems that Iran has come to face in the past decade. An examination of their organizational instruments of power and their politics of rule is necessary before we discuss the nature and characteristics of this establishment.

TOWARD AN ISLAMIC ORDER

Today, a powerful network of 50 or so Shia clerics, most of whom rank just below Ayatollah Khomeyni, the *faghih* or supreme spiritual-political leader, dominate the political, social, and economic life of the Islamic republic.[3] These clergymen constitute the overwhelming majority of the highest officers of the state and dominate the most important governmental structures, including the president; the speaker and the deputy speaker of the Majles (parliament); the prosecutor-general; the head of the Supreme Court; the head of the military revolutionary court; Khomeyni's representatives on various high councils and welfare organizations; the Friday prayer-leaders in the major cities; and the heads of many law enforcement, military, and security agencies. Directly or indirectly, the leading members of this network also control a host of influential revolutionary organizations such as the *Komitehs*, Islamic Associations, and the *Hezbollah*. They outrank civilian cabinet ministers, military commanders, and others with nominal power even in such newly established institutions as the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC).

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[2]On the establishment of Shiism in the 16th century and the subsequent evolution of Shia hierarchy in Iran consult Algar, 1969; Arjomand, 1984; Jackson and Lockhart, 1986; Keddie, 1978; Mazzaoui, 1972.

[3]Several of our respondents were sincerely persuaded that political power in the Islamic Republic is currently concentrated in the hands of no more than five or six key figures, each of whom is somehow supported by "foreign forces," and that the rest of the clergy are directed by these individuals in all major issues facing the country. As will be seen, political power is indeed widely diffused among a large number of autonomous groups and institutions that often act independently of one another and are headed by many more politically authoritative elite members.

A striking feature of post-revolutionary Iran is the rapidity and success with which the clerical establishment has consolidated its power and attempted to institutionalize its rule. This consolidation was achieved mainly by clerics implementing several carefully staged moves against the new regime's secularist opponents. The process initially began with the elimination of pro-monarchy elements immediately after the revolution. By the end of 1979 almost all of the hard-line pro-Shah politicians, army officers, and civil servants were eliminated in one way or the other. This first phase ended with the resignation of the prime minister Mehdi Bazargan in the wake of the seizure of the U.S. embassy in November 1979; also liberal nationalists and other moderate secularist forces were neutralized politically at that time.

The second phase spanned through Bani-Sadr's dismissal from the presidency in June 1981. Over the course of this phase, the clerical regime, which had already fallen out with its leftist collaborators, initiated an extensive purge against the non-Communist leftist and revolutionary force; and by the summer of 1981 the clerics had turned their attention to supporters of Bani-Sadr, who had opposed the complete domination of the governmental apparatus by religious personalities.[4] Following an explosion at the headquarters of the then-ruling Islamic Republican Party (IRP) in Tehran on June 28, 1981, in which at least 71 top party and government leaders were killed, the regime declared its intention of fully cleansing all members and sympathizers of the Mojahedin Khalgh from governmental organizations.[5] This sealed the fate of the Mojahedin and other social radicals. In the meantime, hundreds of officers whom Bani-Sadr had appointed to various positions within the professional military and the IRGC during his presidency were replaced or forcibly retired.

Since then periodic collective crackdowns have taken place, with the targets shifting away from the Mojahedin to various underground leftist groups, members and sympathizers of the Tudeh (communist) party in particular. In late 1983 hundreds of alleged communist officers and civilians were arrested; many of these were later sentenced to long-

[4]In July 1981 Bani-Sadr and the Mojahedin leader Mas'ud Rajavi escaped to Paris. In the next three months, the official total number of executions in Iran reached 1405; Amnesty International put the figure for July-October 1981 at 1800, and Rajavi claimed that the true figure was nearly 3000. See *Iran Press Service* in English (London), October 22, 1981, pp. 10–12. The consolidation of clerical power in these years is examined by Menashri, 1984.

[5]The campaign for the suppression of the Mojahedin and related groups was officially sanctioned on June 30, when Ayatollah Khomeyni blamed the "misled groups" for the explosion at the IRP headquarters.

term prison terms, while others were executed in February 1984.[6] In addition, successive rumored or aborted coups by various anticlerical opposition groups have often stimulated the suppression of opponents, and large numbers of them have been eliminated immediately after each of these events.[7]

The effective neutralization of the political opposition groups and continued purges of secularist elements from the regime in the first few post-revolutionary years went hand in hand with the clerics' efforts to legitimize their rule and institutionalize the new state system. In this continuing process, the clerics proved to be singularly adept at creating new governmental structures, and at securing popular approval for them.[8] The consolidation of the clerical regime has progressed through the following milestones:

1. The popular referendum in March 1979 approved the establishment of an Islamic Republic and was followed by another referendum endorsing the new Islamic constitution in December of that year.
2. The first Presidential and national parliamentary elections were held in January and March of 1980 respectively.
3. The second and third parliamentary elections were held in May 1984 and April 1988, the second presidential elections in August 1985, and in November of the same year Ayatollah Hoseyn-Ali Montazeri was announced as the successor to Khomeyni as the faghih.

THE LOCUS OF AUTHORITY

After the fall of the monarchy, the informal and largely autonomous network of Shia clerics, whose centuries-long experience in organizing and leading popular discontents had served them so well in directing

[6]For a good discussion of the history and evolution of the Iranian left in the pre-revolutionary period, consult Abrahamian, 1982. For an examination of leftist forces under the Islamic rule, see Alaolmolki, 1987, pp. 218–233.

[7]For a detailed discussion of the successive purges directed against the Iranian professional military and others, consult Schahgaldian, 1987, pp. 17–27.

[8]Several senior clerics we interviewed explained that the rapid institutionalization of the clerical regime owed a great deal to the fact that on the eve of revolutionary upheaval in 1978–1979, Khomeyni and a small group of his associates already possessed a more or less consistent vision of an Islamic state. Indeed, although their vision lacked a detailed blueprint and was incomplete in many aspects, it seemed far more coherent than those offered at the time by the Marxists, nationalists, or traditionalists. For Khomeyni's political philosophy and his principles of Islamic rule, consult Algar, 1981; Enayat, 1982; Menashri, 1988; and Momen, 1985.

the anti-Shah revolution, suddenly acquired a new national legitimacy. Later on over the course of the milestones mentioned above, the institutional articulation of this network evolved.

In the beginning, large numbers of clerics often operated independently of one another in their goal of assuming political control. Gradually this network came to assert political power by taking over vital governmental ministries and other state organs. Simultaneously, various clerically dominated new organizations, vigilance groups, and armed revolutionaries took control of the streets, while scores of clerics appropriated the judicial, educational, and internal security systems.[9]

Although these steps were indispensable for the maintenance of their rule, the clerics were keenly aware that their domination of the traditional governmental structures was not enough in itself to mold a new Islamic state and society. To sustain their newly acquired legitimacy and direct the revolutionary dynamism of the population, the clerics came to reconstitute many instruments of state power.

Although the process of institution-building has yet to end, some of these structures have already acquired considerable political weight. Many have also become permanent features of the Iranian political scene and are likely to remain so. In addition, some of these organs have become primary centers for factional struggles among clerics, in the course of which elite factionalism has become a permanent feature of their day-to-day operation.

The Faghih

The current theocratic governmental system in Iran places supreme state authority of the country in the hands of a "just and pious" faghih who is entrusted with "the governance and leadership of the nation." In terms of political influence and weight, the faghih is followed by the principal governmental structures (the presidency, parliament, council of ministers, and judiciary); power is widely diffused among these and several other nongovernmental structures in a manner that enables each of these organs to act autonomously. An elaborate system of carefully drawn checks and balances ties them together and to major clerical figures outside the formal governmental structure. At the very top, the constitutionally enshrined dominance of the clerical network over the institutions of state is illustrated by the duties and powers of Khomeyni as the faghih. As the commander-in-chief of the armed forces (both the professional military and the IRGC) and the head of

[9]For an early discussion of the role played by these organizations in the first post-revolutionary years see Bakhash, 1984, especially pp. 55–66.

the Supreme Defense Council, he has the authority to appoint and dismiss all the military service commanders and to declare war or peace. He is also given the authority to approve or disapprove any presidential candidate and dismiss an elected president if the supreme court finds him "politically incompetent." Finally, he has the right to appoint the highest judicial authorities and Islamic jurists to various positions.[10]

Beyond the powers specified formally by the constitution, Khomeyni has exercised a great deal of authority by force of his personality, revolutionary credential, and guidance of the clerical network. For these and other purposes, Khomeyni maintains a large "secretariat" known commonly as the Imam's Office. The secretariat is headed by several of Khomeyni's trusted advisors, has the responsibility of keeping the faghih informed of internal and foreign developments, issues the Imam's directives and religious orders, and answers questions addressed to the faghih. The Office also acts as a liaison among the nongovernmental charitable and welfare organizations.[11]

Despite his repeatedly expressed desire to follow the governing style of early Muslim leaders like the prophet Mohammad or his son-in-law Imam Ali, Khomeyni has left the day-to-day management of state affairs to his close subordinates. And whenever problems faced by the government become acute—whether food shortages or abuse of civil rights—he orders the "responsible officials" to remedy the situation for which he himself might have borne ultimate responsibility. In this manner, the faghih has consistently deflected public blame away from himself onto cabinet ministers or other expendable lower-level officials.[12]

At the same time, perhaps realizing that his power cannot be absolute, Khomeyni has usually left his public instructions deliberately open-ended and vague; he has shown consistent reluctance over the years to issue specific commands, especially on matters affecting the relationship among government structures and various revolutionary organs. This he has done probably to avoid undermining his prestige, which would follow if his subordinates were somehow unable to implement his wishes quickly.

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[10]The role and duties of the supreme leader are spelled out in detail in Article 110 of the constitution. See Algar, 1980.

[11]The Imam's Office is headed by Khomeyni's long-time advisor Hojatoleslam Seyyed Hashem Rasuli-Mahallati who acts as his Chief of Staff. Khomeyni's son Ahmad, meanwhile, supervises the activities of the Imam's Office. For details see *Keyhan Farhangi* (Tehran Monthly in Persian), Vol. 3, No. 12, December 1986, pp. 3–6. Also *International Iran Times*, Vol. 17, No. 23, August 21, 1987, p. 13.

[12]For detailed discussions of Khomeyni's style of rule see Hiro, 1985, pp. 124–135; and Bill, 1982, pp. 41–45.

Khomeyni has demonstrated the same mode of leadership toward factional disputes besetting the clerical network. While remaining publicly aloof from major political controversies and bickerings among his followers, he has urged unity and taken sides only when issues have been deadlocked in a crisis.[13] Indeed, in many cases he has deliberately let influential clerical leaders and government officials gradually evolve into two opposing camps and develop their arguments publicly, and only then has he come down in favor of this or that group.[14]

The political significance of these aspects of Khomeyni's leadership style is by no means confined to shielding him from direct public criticism and reinforcing his personal prestige and power, it has gradually come to be regarded as the ideal manner of conducting the everyday business of the government and of resolving factional discords or policy issues for the rest of the clerical decisionmakers. Indeed, as two senior clerics asserted, this type of leadership has been repeatedly discussed and elaborated on in various local and regional clerical "leadership seminars" and recommended for adoption. This is facilitated, in part, because most members of the ruling clerical network consider Khomeyni as the supreme Shia *marja'e taghlid*, or source of emulation. Moreover, our respondents claimed that the study of Khomeyni's administrative techniques and tactics of statecraft, along with those of early Islamic leaders, have been made a required subject in various theological seminaries where the future leadership of the Islamic republic is supposed to be trained.[15]

The foregoing discussion is not meant to imply that a somewhat unique style of management characterizes the Shia clerical network in Iran, or that Khomeyni has succeeded in setting specific approaches and examples that the rest of clerics invariably accept or employ. Rather, it points to a new managerial behavior that the clerics, even on the ministry level, are encouraged and expected to maintain. If institutionalized further in the future, such a pattern may go a long way in aiding the clerical leaders to out-politic and out-flank their potential

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[13]Khomeyni has nevertheless taken a direct and personal interest in several selected policy issues such as the conduct of the war with Iraq and the purge of opponents of the Islamic regime.

[14]Khomeyni issued a *fatva* (religious order) on December 25, 1987 empowering the leftwingers in the cabinet to nationalize some industrial enterprises and natural resources. The conflicts over this and many other economic issues have been frequent since at least late 1984 between the advocates of a stronger governmental role in socioeconomic matters headed by Prime Minister Hoseyn Musavi, and the fiscally conservative clerics dominating the Council of Guardians. For the text of Khomeyni's decree see *Kayhan Havai* (in Persian) (Tehran), No. 758, December 30, 1987, pp. 1–3; also FBIS-NES-88–004, *Daily Report*, January 7, 1988, p. 50.

[15]In fact, an attempt has also been made by the clerics to justify and support Khomeyni's principles of statecraft on religious grounds. See, for example, Fazeli, 1986; and Haeri-Shirazi, 1984.

secular or military opponents. It may also strengthen the bases of clerical power in Iran.

Council of Guardians and Other State Organs

The objective of the main institutions of the Islamic Republic—the office of faghih, the presidency, the cabinet, and the parliament—has been to insure the continued control of the state by the Shia clergy. The current constitution establishes a strong presidency. Reelected for no more than two four-year terms, the president signs laws and treaties approved by the parliament, receives and appoints ambassadors, and may return for revision laws proposed by the cabinet. He may also chair the Council of Ministers if he finds that necessary. In addition he approves the prime minister's dismissal of a cabinet member. The prime minister, who nominates his cabinet members and normally chairs their meetings, must receive both presidential and parliamentary approval to hold office. The prime minister remains in office as long as he has a vote of confidence from the unicameral parliament, thus exercising control over the cabinet and the prime minister. In addition, the Majles has the power to investigate, impeach, and require the resignation of cabinet members, individually or as a group.[16]

Although the prime minister and president's powers are checked by the parliament, its independence is in turn checked by the powerful Council of Guardians. This body is empowered to supervise presidential and parliamentary elections and review parliamentary acts for their conformity to the principles of religious law and the constitution. The tenure of the 12 member Council of Guardians is six years. The faghih or a Leadership Council (presumably in his absence) chooses six of the guardians; the Supreme Judicial Council, with the approval of the parliament, appoints the remaining six members. Unlike those appointed by the faghih, the second half of the Council's members may be civilian lawyers. Moreover, the parliament must send all its regulations and laws to the Council of Guardians for approval. All the guardians vote on a law's compatibility with the constitution, but only the six clerical members do so on its compatibility with Islamic precepts.

An ingenious constitutional provision (Article 93) ensures the superiority of the Council of Guardians over the parliament, for the latter has no validity until the Council has been formed, and the parliament has approved the six jurist members of the Council. Finally,

[16]The Majles is far from keeping up the stilted style of Middle Eastern parliaments. It often produces spirited, sometimes pointed debates over specific domestic questions, turning it into a freewheeling discussion group not unlike a graduate school seminar or a western-style town gathering.

the Council of Guardians is empowered to establish and supervise the election of a Council of Experts, which has the duty to name either a single successor to Khomeyni as the new faghih, or form a Leadership Council of three to five members who would collectively exercise the faghih's powers after Khomeyni's death.

The Council of Guardians has been an assertive body since its formation in July 1980. At the same time, it has been closely involved in many factional struggles waged by various high-ranking clergymen against one another. Consistently dominated by conservative elements, the Council has remained steadfast in its opposition to the more socially radical middle level clerics who have dominated the parliament.[17] The Council's almost absolute veto power over parliamentary legislation has recently come to be checked by Khomeyni himself. For example, in an unusual move in late August 1987, the faghih intervened personally to overrule the Council and permit price control laws to go into effect.[18] In this instance the parliament had approved wide-ranging powers for the government to impose broad price controls and inflict "religious punishments" on "hoarders and profiteering merchants." The Council of Guardians had earlier found such measures to be unnecessary governmental intervention in the economy.[19]

Again, in a dramatic move last February, Khomeyni carried out a virtual coup against the Council of Guardians by appointing yet another body called *Shoray-e nezarat*, or the Supervision Council, and empowering it to overturn the Guardians' decisions "in the event the Majles and Council of Guardians fail to reach an understanding on theological and legal points."[20] Although the constitutionality of this latest of various councils remains debatable, its makeup indicates clearly that it is designed to further strengthen the current system of checks and balances by preventing the concentration of power in a single state organ. As such, the new body is composed of the 12 current members of the Council of Guardians, President Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi, Majles Speaker Ali-Akbar

[17]Major episodes in the conflict between the parliament and the Council of Guardians will be discussed in Sec. III.

[18]This issue has been a socially sensitive problem because under the current Iranian rationing and price control system, basic amounts of necessities are made available cheaply. The poor are thus sustained at prices they can afford to pay; the wealthy who wish more can buy more but must resort to the "free market" where prices are many times higher.

[19]For coverage of this and related events see *International Iran Times* (weekly in Persian and English), Vol. 27, No. 23, August 21, 1987, p. 16. Also see *Kayhan Havai* (Tehran weekly in Persian), Nos. 760–761, January 13 and 20, pp. 2–3.

[20]For details see *International Iran Times*, Vol. 17, No. 48, February 12, 1988, pp. 1, 12.

Hashemi Rafsanjani, Chief Justice Abdolkarim Musavi-Ardabili, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Tavasoli from Khomeyni's central office, Prosecutor General Mohammad Musavi Khoeyniha, and whichever cabinet minister is directly concerned with the legislation at issue.[21] Furthermore, as of spring 1989 it was not known whether the above-named became members of the council by virtue of the formal positions they hold in the government or because they were among the most influential leaders of the clerical network.

The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC)

This is yet another authoritative body designed to enhance clerical control over other formal governmental structures. This five-member council is composed of the head of the Supreme Court, the attorney general (both of whom are appointed by the faghih), and three other mojtaheds[22] chosen by their colleagues. This powerful body not only controls the entire Iranian judiciary, which in Islam is supposed to be "completely independent and sovereign," but also supervises the work of the Ministry of Justice.[23] It is also the SJC's duty to prepare judicial legislation for the Majles, appoint, assign, and dismiss judges.[24] More important, the SJC submits candidates for the minister of justice post to the prime minister. In addition, working with revolutionary courts, local religious judges, and Khomeyni's clerical representatives in the provinces, the SJC has also succeeded in penetrating and making its influence felt in various provincial center semi-governmental organizations, and in personnel matters within a host of other government agencies.

As stated earlier, the clergy have directly and centrally involved themselves in the everyday business of government. At present these religious leaders include the highest officers of the state: the president; the speaker and deputy speaker of the parliament; the Imam's

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[21]For details see Vahe Petrossian, "Khomeini empowers special assembly to act on economy," *Middle East Economic Digest* (MEED), February 13, 1988, p. 10. Also FBIS-NES-88-032, *Daily Report*, February 18, 1988, p. 63-64.

[22]Literally, a highest-ranking cleric who is qualified to practice *ejtehad* and interpret religious law in accordance with its sources. In Iran, each Shia believer should accept the judgment and follow the example of a living mojtahed.

[23]Under the Shia Islamic laws, the judiciary can not be subjected to any other branch of government. It is a religious duty incumbent upon every judge to enforce divinely revealed laws. The judge is actually an agent of God, not of the government, and is thus directly responsible to God. For details consult Floor, 1985, pp. 112-128; and Noori, 1985, pp. 43-44.

[24]According to Ayatollah Musavi-Ardabili, the judicial branch currently employs over 800 clergymen who work as judges. The total number of judges in Iran is about 3000. See FBIS-NES-88-030, *Daily Report*, February 16, 1988, p. 63.

representatives in all major cities, the prosecutor-general, the head of the Supreme Court, the head of the military revolutionary court, several key cabinet portfolios such as ministers of Interior and Education, members of the Council of Guardians, the heads of several security organizations, and chairmen of some of the most important parliamentary committees. Directly or indirectly, the members of the clerical network also control various educational, health, and welfare foundations and funds; colleges; planning organizations; construction; distribution; and the country's entire military establishment.[25]

Like so many other political aspects of the Islamic system operative in Iran, the ruling clerical network cannot be treated as a unified political whole. The price of generalization and reification would be misunderstanding the goals and specific roles of various aggregations that constitute this network. At the same time, a careful analysis of this network leaves little doubt that its members have much in common. Although many senior members operate autonomously in the style of a bureaucratic-feudal near anarchy, most ruling clerics share sufficient views to give this network considerable internal cohesion and strength. Indeed, ideological, personal, economic, and other disagreements among powerful clerics have so far not irreversibly shaken their hold on power or prevented them from taking common action—often brutal—against their common internal or external adversaries.

With minor variations, members of the network seem to agree on following basic points.

- Belief in the dominant involvement of clergy in political life, particularly regarding their right and religious duty to hold elective or appointive office. In line with this, they are united in viewing middle class secularists as their main internal enemy. They also believe that modern Iranian revolutionary movements preceding that of 1978–1979 were all betrayed by secularist forces (pro-Western liberals and pro-Moscow leftists), and thus the greatest danger to the current Islamic regime may come out of a similar betrayal by secularists and their foreign

[25]According to my calculations, at present the clerics occupy some 350 of the approximately 500 top positions in Iran's central and provincial (ostandari and farmandari) administrative apparatus. In addition, Khomeyni has thus far posted some 160 clerics to "represent" him in various major and middle-sized cities and urban centers throughout Iran. Many of these "Imam's Representatives" actually exercise more power than their counterparts in their specific town, county, or province. For example, Ayatollahs Ehsanbakhsh and Vaez-Tabasi are much more influential in Rasht and Mashad than the civilian governors of Gilan and Khorasan.

supporters. For this reason, they usually advocate extirpation of any secularist dissent.[26]

- Most clerics, especially those in various official and governmental positions, remain committed to the principle of *velayat-e faghih*, in which only a single religious jurist can act as the faghih, and, acting as the trustee of the Hidden Imam, delegate responsibility to others. The principle itself, however, seems to be a fairly new feature of Shia jurisprudence, and it remains controversial. On various occasions, many Iranian clerics, especially some of those in the highest religious positions, have voiced their opposition to this principle. After Khomeyni's death, the prerogative of a single supreme religious leader is bound to be questioned even more vigorously. Nevertheless, those who remain committed to the principle insist that Khomeyni should personally designate a successor and invest him with real authority before he dies. There is also general consensus that the faghih should direct the life of all Shias and lead all operations of government.
- Belief in the necessity of the comprehensive moral transformation of Iranian society. This should be conducted through a nonviolent "cultural revolution" replacing corrupt values with Islamic principles. In line with this type of thought the clerics advocate the imposition of strict Islamic standards of public behavior, including those related to dress, male-female relations, and public entertainment. The clergy is bent on eradicating the middle-class lifestyle because the secular outlook poses a direct threat to their moral authority.
- Commitment to a "neither East nor West" foreign policy that rejects identification or close relations with either superpower, supports Islamic "liberation movements," and advocates the "export" of the Iranian revolution to the rest of the Muslim world as linch-pins of external relations.[27] This exporting, however, is variously conceived in terms of propaganda, moral and material assistance, or acts of terrorism.
- Advocacy of maximum economic self-sufficiency for the country by placing greatest priority on agricultural development, followed by basic production industries, and deemphasis of

[26] Even the most "progressive" and "Westernized" clerics I interviewed did not challenge the principle of clergy involvement in Iranian political and socioeconomic affairs. As a whole, they seemed to possess decidedly low opinions about secularist Iranian leaders regardless of their political stands.

[27] In a particularly strong denunciation of foreign "satans," Khomeyni has declared "America is worse than Britain, Britain is worse than America; the Soviet Union is worse than both of them. They are all worse and more unclean than each other." See Khomeini, 1981, p. 185.

consumer production. However, the advocates of economic autarchy distrust the governmental bureaucracy and reject their potential role as useful agents of change in socioeconomic matters.[28]

- The clergy's overall approach to the country's socioeconomic problems is based on their common belief that if only the rich and the well-to-do sincerely follow Quranic teachings, voluntary equalization of wealth would occur and poverty would go away; if the rich refuse, however, it is the sacred duty of the clergy to restore a moral economic order in line with Islamic teachings. Idealizing a minimal reliance upon possessions, the clerics have been unanimous in attacking the rich for their sumptuary habits and moral decadence.
- The members of the clerical network are also united in their preference for advocacy of pan-Islamic goals and have rejected secular Iranian nationalism as the principal raison d'être of the state or among its prime guiding sources.

COMPOSITION, HIERARCHY, AND ORGANIZATION

As in many other crucial aspects of the Islamic establishment in Iran, the absence of verifiable hard data has hampered western observers in their task of systematically studying the composition and organizational aspects of the clerical network. This shortcoming becomes apparent even when otherwise simple data, such as the overall number of clergymen, are sought. Indeed, there is no consensus about the numerical size of the Shia clerics. Current estimates range from a low of approximately 90,000 to the high figure of over 300,000.[29] We have reason to believe that those with some kind of religious training and position number between 50,000 and 60,000.[30] In addition, there are currently some 40,000 tollab, or theology students, enrolled in

[28]Despite the clergy's mistrust of the traditional Iranian bureaucracy and the periodic purges directed against it, the number of civil servants has shot up from under one million in 1978 to over 1.6 million in mid-1986. See *International Iran Times*, Vol. 17, No. 17, July 10, 1987, p. 16.

[29]In 1977 Iran was estimated to have about 85,000 Shia clerics. Taheri, p. 307. As for current estimates, Dillip Hiro, for example, cites the figure of "90,000 to 120,000." See Hiro, 1985, p. 260. N. R. Keddie settles for the figure of 180,000 although she suspects it could be a little too high. See Keddie, 1983, p. 16. European sources usually go for the higher figures of 250 to 300 thousand, while many clerics inside Iran mention the figure 200,000. See, for example, Khalkhali, 1981, p. 23; also Balta, 1982, p. 136 and *Le Figaro*, June 27, 1985.

[30]Several of our interview subjects asserted that at present the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Education employs over 25,000 of these clerics as teachers of religion and related subjects in Iran's public educational system.

various seminaries in Qom, Mashad, Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, and Tehran. The numbers of both the clerics and theology students, however, have increased steadily since the Iranian revolution, as has the number of mosques. At present, there are about 35,000, with urban mosques growing nearly four-fold from their pre-revolution total of 5000. In addition, the enhanced status of clerics in post-revolutionary Iran has reportedly swollen the ranks of the religiously unqualified or formally untrained rural prayer leaders, urban preachers, procession organizers, and the like by some 60,000 newcomers.[31]

In terms of religious hierarchy, the Shia clerics in Iran can be divided into three broad categories with corresponding subdivisions. At the very top are the very few individuals who bear the title *ayatollah al-ozma* (literally, greatest sign of God) or grand ayatollahs. These are all preeminent religious scholars or *mojtaheds* (usually in their 80s and 90s), whose religious learning qualifies them to interpret religious laws for Shia Muslims. Traditionally, Shia doctrine has advocated the principle that every believer, including junior clerics themselves, must choose a senior mojtahed as a personal guide and a source of emulation in all matters. Mojtaheds are considered to be fallible, and since their rulings do not establish a precedent, the ruling of a living mojtahed takes precedence over rulings of those who have died. All mojtaheds are thus norm-givers of the faithful and repositories and arbiters of political legitimacy. At present there are five living ayatollahs of *al-ozma* rank in Iran.[32]

Immediately below the grand ayatollahs come the "ordinary" ayatollahs. These are high-ranking senior professional clerics who have traditionally devoted their careers to studying and teaching the seminary students but who nevertheless have come to occupy many influential positions in the Islamic republic. Many of these act as Imam's Representatives in major urban centers and provinces. At present, there are about 200 or so clerics of ayatollah rank who are regarded so by the rest of the clerics as well as by the Shia population at large.[33]

The second tier of the clerical network is made up of people carrying honorific titles of *hojatoleslam va al-momenin* (literally, proof of Islam and Muslims), *hojatoleslam* (proof of Islam), and *saqatoleslam* (Islam's

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[31]The above figures were supplied by one of our elderly interview subjects who was in a position to know a great deal about quantitative aspects of the Shia network in Iran. In general, they correspond to figures appearing occasionally in various periodical sources published in Iran.

[32]These are Ayatollahs Khomeyni (age 88), Mohammad-Reza Golpayegani (age 92), Shahab-ed-Din Marashi Najafi (age 88), and Hassan Tabatabai Qomi (age 79). In addition, Ayatollah al-ozma Abolqasem Musavi Khoi (age 89) lives in Najaf, Iraq.

[33]Many of these ayatollahs are distinguished enough to operate their own independent seminaries.

trusted one).[34] Members of this second category number about 7000.[35] These middle-level clerics are the primary interpreters of the ideas of senior ayatollahs, Khomeyni in particular, and many of them act as the official line of the regime to the public. They have all completed at least a five year course of study in Iran's various theological schools; many of the more senior ones have usually spent several more years at Najaf as students. Traditionally these men derived all of their livelihood by performing religious services, but in the past few years preaching and leading prayers have ceased to be their primary duty. Instead, middle-level clerics, as a group, have succeeded in steadily increasing their influence and political weight in contemporary Iranian political life. If continued in the future, this phenomenon is likely to translate into stronger political control of the regime by younger men.

At present, middle-level clerics, especially the more junior saqatoleslams, constitute a dynamic group; they help in assuring dominance of the clergy in Iranian politics. Many of these men serve in various revolutionary *Komitehs* (committees) and supervise local government and municipal organs; others are involved in law enforcement and security agencies, while still others actively participate in recruiting loyalist lay persons to help manage the government. Perhaps more important, as several of our respondents asserted, these younger clerics have formed their own informal interlocking organizations. These function like political action committees and are then used as forums to privately debate and discuss social and political issues of the day.

The third category of the clerical network is composed of *tollab* (plural of *talabeh*) or theological seminary students. Religious education has traditionally provided upward mobility for those with the stamina to undergo the rigorous training required for a high clerical position. For others it has been family tradition for generations. At present, all of the major Iranian cities as well as most of the smaller ones have their own seminaries. The main seminary center is Qom where about 25,000 tollab are enrolled in its 30 or so colleges.[36] The educational system practiced in these seminaries contrasts sharply with its secular counterpart. Here students select the subjects they wish to study, with whoever they like, and for a duration of their choice.

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[34] *Hojatoleslam va al-momenin* seems to be a new title coined in the early post-revolutionary years, presumably in an attempt to divide the hojatoleslams into senior and junior subgroups.

[35] Of this number, perhaps some 1500 to 2000 people are hojatoleslams; most of the rest are former students or recent graduates of Iran's theological schools.

[36] The best known of these schools is the Feyziyeh college where Khomeyni had taught earlier and where many of the clerical leaders of the Iranian revolution were originally trained.

There are no exams, no grades, no required courses, no diplomas, and no tuition expenses. Instead, it is the teacher who provides stipends to his students for academic supplies and living expenses.[37] Because of these and similar other reasons, Shia seminaries have had little disciplinary problems; instead, strong bonds of respect and devotion usually characterize student-teacher relations, which often remain unchanged for a lifetime.

Under the Islamic republic, the *tollab* have been regarded as the future hope and standard bearers of the regime. Many of these men are sent on temporary assignments to spread the regime's ideals throughout the country; large numbers were also dispatched to the Iraqi warfront as well. Meanwhile, from the very outset, regime officials have utilized a variety of means designed to ensure the political loyalty of tollab. This effort, however, has not succeeded completely. In the past few years, some mojtaheds have used their religious authority to challenge specific governmental orders, while others have repeatedly attempted to turn the seminaries into recruiting grounds for their particular ideological or factional causes.[38]

The clerics' control of Iran's state machinery and public life in the past ten years has generally boosted the status, prestige, and political influence of members of this network regardless of specific hierarchical positions they occupy. This phenomenon, however, has affected several traditional clerical subgroups more favorably than others, most apparently the *seyyeds* (literally, gentlemen). These are clerics who claim direct descendance from the prophet Mohammad and who have traditionally considered it their birthright to rule over all Muslims.[39] The seyyeds also enjoy special honors and privileges among the faithful.[40]

Among these men the Tabatabai seyyeds have traditionally been the most distinguished subgroup; their name indicates descendance from

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[37]For coverage of the Shia Islamic educational system and related topics consult Fischer, 1980b, pp. 61–103.

[38]The most recent case of such attempts was revealed early last year in connection with the arrest of Mehdi Hashemi, the brother of Ayatollah Montazeri's son-in-law and the head of a fundamentalist faction responsible for "exporting" the Islamic revolution to other Muslim countries. Using their religious influence among the tollab, members of this group had reportedly been recruiting and training seminary students for their own factional purposes. Mehdi Hashemi was executed in mid-September 1987. For details of this episode see *Iran Press Digest*, No. 43 and 44, November 1986; the *Middle East*, April 1987, pp. 15–17; *International Iran Times*, Nos. 788–792, January 1987; *Resalat* (Tehran daily in Persian), issues 16, 17, 21, and 23, 1987.

[39]In the rural areas, many seyyeds wear a green belt to signify that they are from the Prophet's own Hashemi clan. The seyyeds, who also wear black turbans instead of the usual white or beige, form no more than 30 percent of all clerics in Iran.

[40]For details see *International Iran Times*, December 13, 1985, p. 13.

the Prophet on both sides. Immediately below these come the Hoseyni seyyeds, who trace their ancestry to Hoseyn, the third Shia Imam. Then come the Razavi and Hasani seyyeds who claim to be descendants of the eighth and the second Imams, respectively. The most numerous seyyeds are the Musavis, who claim lineage from Musa Ibn Ja'far, the seventh Imam. At present, seyyeds of all types reportedly occupy several hundred top posts in the Islamic republic.[41]

More important, Khomeyni himself is a Musavi seyyed. Apparently to insure the political loyalty of key office-holders, he has surrounded himself with many Musavi seyyeds who presumably have backgrounds in common with him. At present, Iran's President, the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, and many of the members of the cabinet are members of the same Musavi subgroup. In addition, Musavi seyyeds reportedly accounted for 53 deputies in the 271-member parliament whose term expired in April 1988. Also seven out of 23 provincial governor generals in 1985 were reported to be Musavi seyyeds. Finally, men directly related to Khomeyni himself are said to hold some 50 key positions, including a Deputy Prime Minister.[42]

SOURCES OF POWER AND MODUS OPERANDI

Much has been written about the manner in which the clerics achieved political power in Iran in 1979 and the reasons for their keeping it since then. The consensus in this literature is that the clerics have gained and stayed in power because of their close association with masses of people, the ideological appeal of Shiism, the clerics' repressive policies, the weakness of opposition forces, and the charismatic leadership of Khomeyni. Although all of these explanations may well be correct, there are certain aspects of this issue—crucial in better understanding the internal dynamics of clerics' political behavior—that need to be considered here. To begin with, religious solidarity within the ruling clerical elite has been greatly reinforced by shared experience of many of its key leaders before and after the Islamic revolution. Early on, they had developed friendly ties among themselves through years of close association in the narrow, intensely religious, and

[41]For a discussion of seyyeds and their role in contemporary Iran, see Taheri, 1986, pp. 26–29, 32–34, and 289–290.

[42]Several of our clerical respondents, including one Musavi seyyed, rejected any notion of cronyism in the preponderance of Musavi seyyeds in top government positions and ascribed their success to personal ability and religious merit. Most others, however, shared the opinion that often strong bonds of solidarity tie together seyyeds of particular subgroups. The specific nature of such relationships and their internal dynamics still remain to be studied systematically. The above figures appear in Taheri, 1986, p. 290.

personal world of religious schools and underground opposition activities to the Shah's regime.

Not unlike members of a banned sectarian fraternity or a secret revolutionary organization, these individuals worked, studied, and lived together for many years, often in the same compounds. At the same time, their personal ties, strengthened by pressures coming from the usually hostile political environment of the 1960s and 1970s, had been reinforced in many cases by close family and marriage relations as well. For example, Khomeyni lived continuously in Qom for about 40 years, during which time he taught about 10,000 young seminary students. About 300 of these personally and ideologically devoted followers constituted the central core of his underground clerical movement, which came to lead the Islamic revolution. Later, many of these tollab became key political figures in the Islamic Republic. Often regarded as the hearts and brains of the present regime, such men included Rafsanjani, Khamenei, Montazeri, Beheshti, Mahdavi Kani, Meshkini, Sane'i, Qodusi, Khalkhali, Bahonar, Emami Kashani, Hojati Kermani, Mohammad Mohammadi, Hasan Taheri, Movehedi Kermani, Mohammad Yazdi, and many others.[43]

Moreover, many of these people had also shared prison experiences, often in the same prison or even in the same cells, throughout the 1970s. Many others spent considerable time together while in internal exile.[44] The clerics' close personal ties and shared experiences have strengthened their underlying unity in many other ways as well. For example, their intimacy has meant that they are well aware of one another's personality traits, private weaknesses, ambitions, and ties to trusted colleagues. But since this knowledge is reciprocal, it gives key members of the network ample opportunity for developing various mechanisms for self-preservation and at the same time makes personal or factional rivalries among them more manageable.[45] The political significance of this factor is multiplied because Iran's clerical establishment has often operated in a milieu of denunciations and false accusations, of conspiracies, censorship, and factional struggles. This type of underlying unity, reinforced by Khomeyni's paternal relations, has so

[43]A partial list of some 180 of Khomeyni's young students who had worked underground with him in the pre-revolutionary period appears in Ruhani, 1982a, pp. 43–50.

[44]For a description of many specific instances of this, see Davani, 1981, especially Vol. 6, pp. 97–111.

[45]One of the clerical interview subjects who for a long time had known and worked with several well-known members of the ruling clerics repeatedly asserted that these people were on a first-name basis, and that specific stories about ideological and other divisions among the elite that appear in foreign press reports often make amusing readings during their private gatherings.

far preserved the clerical network against such shocks as the June 1981 IRP bombing that would have destroyed weaker groups.

Shared objectives, similar backgrounds, and internal religious solidarity are not alone in assisting the clerics to hold onto political power in Iran. Instead, in their attempts to defeat their opponents and to consolidate their position, they have come to utilize many religiously sanctioned and culturally accepted elements of traditional Iranian political behavior. They have also succeeded in refining many time-tested tactics of public management and have woven these into an elaborate mechanism for political survival.

Among the main features of this mechanism is the long-established and often paranoid preoccupation of Shia clerics with *razdari* or secrecy.[46] This concern surrounds the activities and public and private lives of most key figures in the clerical establishment. Indeed, one of the operative principles of clerical conduct is "har kas dast az jan shuyad, raz be digaran guyad" (literally, the loose-mouthed do not survive); i.e., a clergyman does not reveal to laymen authentic information about inner dynamics or points of discord among the clergy.[47] As several of the interview subjects asserted, this unwritten rule of behavior is learned by tollab early in life and transmitted through a rigid process of religious socialization and acculturation in the theological schools.[48] And the emphasis on secrecy on internal matters has, of course, much to do with the historical experience of various Shia minority sects in the formative periods of Shia doctrine and outlook.[49] Similarly, the generally repressive policies of both Pahlavi shahs after the 1920s against the Shia clerics hardened their traditional secretive tendencies.[50]

Indeed, the practice of keeping laymen as much in the dark as possible about internal clerical matters is commonly considered a primary element in their system preservation techniques; at the same time, mutually protective silence is viewed as a necessity for avoiding or

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[46]Imam Hassan, the second Imam of the Shias, is related to have instructed his colleagues, "If you have something in one hand, hide it from the other." See Shafa, 1983, pp. 598–599.

[47]Religious commendations for *razdari* and justifications for it are discussed and elaborated by many medieval and modern Shia theologians and scholars. See, for example, al-Kolayni, 1950, especially Ketab al-iman va al-Kofr; and Kashef al-Qita, 1961.

[48]The consensus in literature on Khomeyni's life and activities is that he has always maintained strict discipline among his close aides and students, and required them to adhere to this principle.

[49]See Hodgson, 1955, pp. 1–13; also Mazzaoui, 1972; Smith, 1974; Faza'i, 1984; Modaressi-Chahardehi, 1981.

[50]For a discussion of state-clergy relations under the Pahlavis see Faghfoory, 1987, pp. 413–432; Akhavi, 1980; Fischer, 1980b; Ramazani, 1964, pp. 26–28.

lessening strife among their own ranks. It is normally adhered to even during bitter personal and political intra-elite conflicts. Despite the ongoing factional struggles among the clerics during the past nine years of their rule and the effective neutralization of many "dissident" clerics such as Ayatollah Shariatmadari in 1982, only in one case has this principle been violated and that by "outsiders" who were rejected by the network.[51]

In addition to secrecy, the ruling clerical network is also distinguished by its consistent practice of *taqiyeh*, *tanfiyeh*, and *cheleh* as interconnected patterns of political behavior and tools of public management. The doctrine of *taqiyeh* or *ketman* (literally, religious dissimulation) is a traditionally vital code of behavior for the Shia clerics, developed in the 8th century. Originally, it protected the followers of Jafar Sadegh, the 6th Imam of Shias, against repression by their Sunni rulers.[52] Later on, it became an organic part of the Shia belief system and was praised and commended by Shia clerics.[53] Dissimulation is considered lawful and clerics resort to it whenever they believe there may be danger to their property or lives if they utter the truth. Essentially, *ketman* is used for misleading strangers and opponents about one's true beliefs and commitments if a given situation requires it. When provisions of *taqiyeh* come into play, a Shia cleric is religiously justified to take whatever public stands he prefers without either worrying about possible contradictions with positions taken earlier or having remorse later.[54]

Indeed, as Khomeyni himself has explained, *"Taqiyeh's* necessity is one of the clearest logical imperatives; it is meant that one is free to say things which are not true, or do things which are otherwise against religious law, in defense of his life, honor or property"; similarly, the ayatollah has gone one step further and declared *"Taqiyeh* is not only consistent with logic, but it is one of the private instructions of the Prophet."[55] More important, *taqiyeh* can be decided on jointly and practiced collectively by a group of clerics if necessary. When used as

[51]This refers to former President Bani-Sadr and some of his clerical sympathizers who, after escaping to France in 1981, started publishing the newspaper *Enghelab-e Eslami*, which has often printed detailed information on factional alignments among the clergy, and ideological and political orientations of specific clerics. On the Shariatmadari case see Ruhani, 1982b.

[52]Imam Jafar Sadegh is related to have said *"Taqiyeh* is the shield of faith; he who does not practice taqiyeh has no faith, for nine tenths of religion is in *taqiyeh* and one tenth in all other deeds." See Bagher Majlesi as quoted in Shafa, 1983, p. 599. Also see Enayat, 1982, p. 176.

[53]Momen, 1985, p. 236. Shafa, 1983, pp. 596–600.

[54]For an examination of *taqiyeh's* evolution, its religious justification, and its criticism by modernist Islamic scholars, see Corbin, 1971; and Enayat, 1982, pp. 175–181.

[55]These quotations are from Khomeyni, 1979, pp. 128–129.

such, it does not involve loss of face by the participants; on the contrary, the practice tends to increase solidarity among the group. Also a group *taqiyeh* cannot be revealed to outsiders because the revealer himself would not be trusted by them and would be assumed to play *taqiyeh* in order to confuse them.

Although *taqiyeh* flourished during many past centuries in Shia thought and practice, but only since the Islamic revolution has it reached its apex as a well-refined behavioral quality. Indeed, Khomeyni and his clerical associates are on record to have resorted to this tactic in scores of cases against their opponents.[56] The religious justification of *ketman* has given the clerics an extraordinary political versatility.[57] By utilizing this and similar other measures, the clerical leaders of Iran have often misrepresented their objectives,[58] made tactical compromises with opponents,[59] and in more than one case rapidly changed position when they judged it necessary.[60] At the same time, the use of *taqiyeh* has helped to perpetuate an atmosphere of controlled tension, distrust, and suspicion among the major clerical power centers and personalities.[61]

The practice of *tanfiyeh* is yet another dynamic principle in a cluster of operative political traditions of the Iranian clergy. In simple terms, it is a time-tested tactic for judiciously doing nothing. Historically, *tanfiyeh* grew out of the last of the three well-known responses that the Shia clerics demonstrated in their attitude toward political authority: cooperation, agitation, and aloofness. When a cleric senses that there is too much turmoil around him, or when factional quarrels among

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[56]Many instances, during the years 1978–1981, in which Khomeyni obviously used *taqiyeh* to confuse his opponents and the foreign press are documented in Shafa, 1983, pp. 829–854; for earlier cases of *taqiyeh* played by Khomeyni in pre-revolutionary years see Ruhani, 1982a, pp. 96–97. For other clerics' use of this tactic in the past few years, see Shafa, 1983, pp. §55–886.

[57]Iranian Shia clergy are not alone in demonstrating unusual political flexibility. Other Muslim clerics have occasionally done so in different contexts. For an example of this in the early years of Soviet domination in Central Asia see Massell, 1974.

[58]An early example of this was provided by Khomeyni himself when he came to reside in Paris from October 1978 to February 1979. Throughout this period, he repeatedly asserted that after the monarchy's fall he would not ever hold office but "merely guide the people." Some of Khomeyni's assertions to this effect appear in Shafa, 1983, pp. 829–830. Other instances of *taqiyeh* by Khomeyni are documented in Shafa, 1987, Vol. 2, p. 777

[59]Examples include clerical coalitions with Mehdi Bazargan and liberals, February-August 1979; and with Tudeh party, November 1979-December 1981.

[60]The latest of these sudden policy changes occurred in early August 1988 when the clerical government accepted the UN Ceasefire Resolution 598 for ending the Iran-Iraq war.

[61]Mistrust and suspicion of other people's true intentions have often been cited as a widespread and important attitudinal feature of Iranian society and political life. For examination of this theme see Ajami, 1969, Ch. 9; Beeman, 1976, pp. 37–39; Fatemi, 1962; Jamalzadeh, 1966; Kazemzadeh-Iranshahr, 1956; Westwood, 1965; Zonis, 1971, Ch. 8; and many others.

groups with which he is associated reach a high point, he may resort to *tanfiyeh* in order to avoid catastrophe, preserve security, neutralize personal danger, or insure the continuity of the group.

During *tanfiyeh* a cleric usually maintains his position and ignores the tension around him. And while refusing to go into seclusion, he remains silent, uncommitted, neutral, and waiting. At the same time, he does nothing to either befriend or further alienate his opponents. The logic behind this traditionally accepted and religiously sanctioned behavior involves certain assumptions: Sooner or later all doers are likely to commit mistakes, and eventually undo themselves; the agitated will spend their energy. Instead, when a cleric resorts to *tanfiyeh*, he concentrates his attention on examining his options and determines the best tactics for his next open move against opponents.

Again, when a cleric is in *tanfiyeh*, his family, close associates, and friends know about it; but they would not pressure him to exercise his usual responsibilities. Similarly, his colleagues and subordinates would refrain from asking him for direction or pressing him with sensitive questions. Instead, they would respect (and seldom criticize) him because they believe that he has good reasons, unknown to them, to engage in *tanfiyeh*.

The utility of *tanfiyeh* is apparent in several respects. First, it is a means through which factional or personal tension is reduced and agitation lowered during intense intra-elite struggles. It is also a way of testing the capabilities of subordinates or colleagues to manage political struggles in the "absence" of the leader. Finally, it is a tool for self-preservation, whereby a clerical politician can presumably evade responsibility for making a decision whose consequences may not be favorable for him. In sum, *tanfiyeh* creates an aura of mystery and uncertainty, but at the same time lengthens factional rivalries.[62]

Finally, a similar function is served by the practice of the *chehele*, which means a cycle of forty. It is a measure by which a Shia cleric totally withdraws himself from all daily affairs for forty days; during this period he is to examine himself and his life, reorganize his

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[62]A closer examination of current Iranian political science leaves little doubt that major clerical leaders often resort to *tanfiyeh* during severe factional struggles. For example, after dismissing speculation about a conflict between him and Rafsanjani in connection with the arrest of Mehdi Hashemi in early November 1986, Ayatollah Montaseri apparently resorted to *tanfiyeh* for several weeks and refrained from any public utterances. Khomeyni has done the same on many occasions; in the period from April to July 1988, he remained publicly silent and inactive at a time when factional discord among his lieutenants had reportedly reached a high point following Iran's military setbacks at the Iraqi front. Khomeyni finally pulled out all his rhetorical stops on July 20 to justify his acceptance of the UN peace resolution.

thoughts, and plan for the future.[63] But few people are allowed to meet a cleric who has gone into *chehele*, unlike the situation with *tanfiyeh*, also a cleric's closest associates expect major decisions to be announced to them following these prolonged seclusions. Finally, whereas *tanfiyeh* is practiced widely among middle-level Shia clerics, many of our respondents asserted that only distinguished mojtaheds could really afford to go into *chehele*.[64]

Aside from utilizing these specific traditional behavioral elements in its collective modus operandi, the clerical establishment has also come to employ several other distinct historical approaches in its attempts to strengthen its popular appeal and widen its support bases. The first of these has to do with the Iranian society's need for charismatic leadership and its demand for submission to authority. More than 20 centuries of continuous existence as a people has given Iran a rich and complex inheritance; charismatic leadership has endured centuries of political and social turmoil as one of the primary features of this heritage. Indeed, the rock carvings and inscriptions of pre-Islamic dynasties that cover the Iranian plateau; the legends of *Shahnameh*, Iran's national epic story; the grandiose titles of most Shahs; the popular stories of Imam Ali's heroism; and the propaganda surrounding Ayatollah Khomeyni all emphasize one consistent theme: From time immemorial, Iran's rulers—whether kings, Imams, or emperors—have ruled by force of individual personality and by their charisma. And no matter where these leaders derived their charisma, they were expected to rule personally and decisively.[65]

Acutely aware of these prerequisites for effective leadership, the Islamic authorities have spared no effort to present themselves as wise, pious, and strong men who remain dedicated to ideals of Islam and the revolution and who tolerate no excuses in serving the masses. In line with this, Khomeyni himself is officially painted as a most charismatic human being. The government-controlled T.V., radio, newspapers, as well as the country's educational system, present him as a singular, all-knowing, and powerful creature who constantly guards the nation from foreign intrusion, confronts more powerful enemies, and who

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[63]Ayatollah Khomeyni is reported to have continued his well-practiced *chehele* sequences even after he became the faghih. See Taheri, 1986 pp. 119–121. This may explain his periodic extended absences from Iran's public life, which the western media invariably attribute to his presumed poor health.

[64]The foregoing discussion is based in good part on information solicited from clerical interview subjects. Unfortunately, these and many other aspects of Shia clerics' behavioral patterns have thus far received scant scholarly attention in the United States.

[65]This theme is examined in Arasteh, 1964; Behnam, 1986; Gable, 1959; and McClelland, 1963.

recognizes no ideals higher than the glory of Islam.[66] At the same time, Khomeyni is painted to be a man of people, neither distinct from the average Iranian nor associated with any power center, including, according to a new taboo, his own wife and family members. Moreover, his asceticism wards off suspicion of corruption and connotes a refusal to be seduced by materialism and power. The passionate employment of these themes has helped the clerics in sustaining their rule in the midst of internal and external opposition.

The clerical establishment's modus operandi is also characterized by its concern and constant agitation for the theme of justice (or *adl*). The belief in *adalat* or divine justice is central to Shia religion. To Shiism, belief in *adalat* is a fundamental principle of faith, as important as the other four elements of the religion.[67] Justice has also a special meaning for Iranians because it is an ancient ideal inherited from their pre-Islamic culture as well as an overriding theme in Persian literature and folklore.[68] Justice has little to do with the western notion of individual freedom. Instead, *adl* is meant to preserve order in society. A just government should protect citizens against chaos and one another, even by methods that may be arbitrary or harsh. Credible justice has to be rapid and visible.[69]

In view of these popular precepts, the clerical network has sought to present "administration of justice" as an integral feature of its rule. Indeed, as a part of their political strategy and style of government, the clerics have developed and utilized this theme in a variety of domestic and foreign policy situations. For example, they have sought to mesmerize the poor masses of practicing Shia believers by constant agitation around the theme of Islamic social justice and in the process have successfully coopted leftist ideas and programs. This tactic, along with other factors, has helped the network to discredit and disarm the

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[66]Some of Khomeyni's most widely used titles include: The Savior of Generations, The Crusher of Oppressors, The Moses of Time, The Idol Smasher of Time, The Greatest Guide, Humbler of Satan, Glorious Upholder of Faith, Sole Hope of the Downtrodden, and The Vicar of Islam.

[67]These principles are belief in *towhid* (the unity of God), *nobovvat* (prophethood), *Ma'ad* (resurrection), and *imamat* (Ali's place as leader of Muslims). See Momen, 1985, pp. 176–178.

[68]For the role and place of justice in Shia thought and Iranian history see Arjomand, 1979; Calder, 1982; Keddie, 1980; Lambton, 1955a; Mottahedeh, 1980, pp. 178–179.

[69]The Persian proverb *zolm bel saviyeh adl ast* (oppression equally applied is justice) suggests that the purpose of a ruler's justice is to prevent citizens from gaining an advantage over one another, even if such justice requires applying harsh measures against the whole society.

leftist forces.[70] In the same manner, the Shia clerics justify their offensive against "evil and satanic" outside forces and their "domestic lackeys" in the name of an all-out Islamic struggle for justice. This tactic too has often enabled the clerical network to solidify its otherwise fractious followers against much feared common external adversaries.[71]

In focusing their ire upon outside "nonbelievers" and *monafeghin* (enemies of Islam), the clerically controlled Iranian mass media often whips up popular xenophobic attitudes as well. In Iran foreigners have traditionally meant Christian Europeans, most of Iran's neighbors, and more recently Americans. According to clerical politicians, society's ills are mainly, if not entirely, due to exploitation by *ajaneb* (foreigners) during the monarchy.[72] Some clerics find this notion not only attractive but also profitable as it absolves them of responsibility for a variety of problems. They can claim to be doing their best in serving the people but blame adverse results on scheming foreigners.

Finally, an integral part of the clerics' general management pattern is illustrated by their passionate preoccupation with ideological/religious indoctrination, conformity, and political repression. The effort to indoctrinate the population is conducted not just in the sense of teaching Islamic religious dogmas and Khomeyni's political ideology, it is carried out in the broader sense of inculcating new social and cultural norms. For this purpose, the clerics have required the government to place all its available resources at their disposal. In addition, they have made indoctrination a primary function of all Islamic revolutionary organizations, regardless of their nature and other functions. At present, these include the revolutionary committees, Islamic associations and societies, charitable and welfare organizations, the IRGC, the *Basij* (the Mobilization Army), and the country's entire private educational network.

A carefully planned program of political socialization has also been set up for each of these organizations.[73] The youth, women, and families of martyrs—those who have died in the course of the war against

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[70]Bill, 1982, p. 43.

[71]Ibid, p. 44.

[72]The Shia clerics are not alone in holding this belief. The complicity of *ajaneb* in Iran's contemporary misfortunes is shared widely by many groups and classes; it holds tremendous appeal for all sections of society. Many secular intellectuals also love the idea because it covers their inability to credibly explain the root causes of socioeconomic and other problems facing the nation. The clerics' views on this issue are reflected, among others, in *al-Towhid*, Vol. 2, No. 3, April-June 1985, p. 8. Also see *Kayhan Havai*, November 27, 1985, p. 15.

[73]The regime's indoctrination and educational activities are often coordinated by the powerful Committee for Cultural Revolution, which was set up on June 12, 1980. Its objectives include determination of Iran's educational strategy and system, specification of the

Iraq or during clashes against anti-regime elements—are the special object of intense political-religious indoctrination. Women in particular are viewed as the most important link in further mass mobilization of the population. They are encouraged to instill in their children the official ideology and teachings of Khomeyni. In this way, the regime hopes that the younger generation will be socialized rapidly enough to ensure the continued existence of the Islamic government in Iran. In this context, the theme of "martyrdom" has become a most powerful tool for political socialization activities conducted by these organizations.[74] Those who sacrifice their lives for the realization of the regime's ideals and policies are promised eternal life in heaven and a glorious memory on earth. Trained and indoctrinated in this manner, the membership of the above-mentioned organizations are often mobilized effectively (often as *Hezbollah*) on short notice for sponsored mass demonstrations in support of the regime or for other propaganda functions sanctioned by ruling clerics.

The clerical system in Iran is far more complex, flexible, and resilient than expected. The network's inner logic, shaped by historical experience and religious custom, is quite sound, and its principles of government and public management are essentially compatible with one another. At the same time, these principles are agreeable to the thinking, lifestyles, tastes, and preferences of the masses of practicing Shia Iranians and exhibit a profound sense of continuity with that country's long history. This is not meant to imply that the clerical rulers of Iran are united in their pursuit of Islamic goals, or that they lack deep-seated personal or other divisions. On the contrary, elite factionalism and often violent conflicts have been a reality of this network's existence since its birth.

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objectives and direction of this education, and the formulation of its ideological content. The Committee also supervises the formal educational establishments from pre-elementary to the highest levels. It supervises the work of universities and coordinates its activities with other similar "autonomous" institutions in order to prevent deviation from the religious network's political and ideological goals. For further details see Bakhash, 1984, pp. 110–114; Hiro, 1985, pp. 255–256; Hussain, 1985, pp. 147–148.

[74]On the role of martyrdom in Shia religious thought as well as Iranian culture, consult Enayat, 1982, pp. 181–194; Jafri, 1979; Minorsky, 1955; Momen, 1985, pp. 236–238; and Thaiss, 1972.

III. CLERICAL FACTIONALISM

OVERVIEW

As it stands today, the ruling clerical establishment is far from being a monolithic whole. Despite their basic commitment to Islam and the revolution, the clerical leaders often demonstrate contradictory attitudes and hold opposing viewpoints on many issues. Under the monarchy, few people had any stake, role, or experience in government affairs, and narrow self-interest inevitably became highly developed. Thus personal and personality conflicts, the origin of which is mostly obscure, play a large role. This goes hand in hand with common provincial origins, class backgrounds, and shared past experiences.[1]

Aside from personality issues, many high-ranking clerical leaders appear to be divided into various subgroups according to their political and ideological preferences. This can be gleaned primarily from an examination of pronouncements and expressed views of these leaders during official interviews and the like. Thus, there are clerics, for example, who seem to be much more tolerant and flexible than others concerning such issues as relations with western countries or women's freedom and their legal equality with men. Others are quite reactionary and fundamentalist in their attitudes on these or other issues, and a third group alters its positions according to the popular mood of the time.

The usual western tendency to describe Iranian political players or factional groups in terms of "liberal," "rightist," or "fundamentalist" are clearly inadequate; these words do not meaningfully communicate subtle differences among local actors or clusters. More than reflecting the realities of Iran's political scene, such concepts reflect the West's drive for discovery of straight lines in a society where only the Eastern world of Arabesques prevails. Although clerical factions do exist,

[1]For example, many of our respondents asserted that clerics coming from Isfahan and its surrounding villages and towns congregate around Ayatollah Montazeri and tend to support high-ranking clerics from their own province, often regardless of issues involved; those allied with President Khamenei tend to come from northeastern parts of the country, and many of Hojatoleslam Khoeiniha's supporters originate in Zanjan. Cleavages formed around provincial backgrounds also tend to affect inter-ethnic relations. For example, Ayatollah Shariatmadari's rivalry with Khomeyni in the 1979–1981 period acquired ethnic coloring and pitted many Azerbajanian Shias against the Persian element. Again, the fact that Ayatollahs Golpayegani and Hashemi-Rafsanjani come from feudal landowning families, whereas Ayatollahs Montazeri and Meshkini were raised in humble peasant families, has certainly not been lost on their followers. For a discussion of social backgrounds of the clergy see Hooglund, 1982.

pinpointing them is made difficult because of the fluidity of the clerical network and the elusive nature of the factions and their proponents. This difficulty is further compounded by the dispersion of factions within many governmental and revolutionary organs and the subtlety of the manner of argumentation between the various groups. Similarly, the boundaries of each faction are often not clearly identifiable; at times the positions that clerical factions take overlap depending on the nature of the issues at hand. In the Iranian political context, individuals are largely free to change allegiances over time depending on circumstances; they often switch alliances to maximize their political longevity or to expand their bases of support. Furthermore, it has not been uncommon for a high-ranking cleric to speak one way and to act in quite another way. Finally, another complication involves the ingrained tendency of clerical leaders to mask their individuality behind a public show of sameness and unanimity.

TYPES OF INTRA-ELITE DISCORDS

Despite the difficulties it is important to attempt to differentiate among several types and levels of clerical factionalism, no matter how subtle, that are observable over the last few years and point to a more stable pattern of intra-elite factional relationships. This approach may facilitate a better understanding of the current factional situation in Iran and clarify many otherwise moot and confusing points encountered by current scholarship on Iranian politics. In assessing the various episodes and instances of political struggles among the ruling Shia clerics, it is possible to distinguish at least three types of factional conflicts: (1) succession to Khomeyni; (2) personal discords among many middle-level clerical politicians and their junior civilian partners within and between broad clerical coalitions; and (3) competition between "insiders" (the court clerics) and "outsiders" (the independent clerics). Each of these conflicts differs from the others in terms of political significance, intensity, limitations, and policy consequences.

The Succession Issue

Almost from the very beginning of their rule, Iran's clerical network has been perplexed by the issue of who would rule after Khomeyni's death. The manner in which this issue is eventually resolved will be a major test for the clerical regime's survival and its future ideological basis; it is also one of the major causes of internal discord among the clergy. In doing their jobs from day to day, the clerics closest to

Khomeyni have typically sought access to him, not independence from him. Indeed, judging by their recent behavior, they seem to be seriously preparing for his death; and jockeying for position has lately become a serious business in the clerical hierarchy.[2]

Despite the clerics' intense preoccupation with issues of death and martyrdom, when they drew up the Islamic Republic's constitution in early 1979 they did not mention the death of the country's Supreme Leader. Instead, two of the constitution's articles described the qualities required from prospective candidates for the position of faghih, and a rather vague selection process for the faghih was prescribed.[3] In accordance with its provisions, on December 10, 1982 elections were held for a permanent Council of Experts, an 83-member clerical body that would select a successor. Failing to agree on a suitable successor, the Council would name a Leadership Council of three or five *mojtaheds* who would collectively undertake the faghih's functions.[4]

However, much before these elections, Khomeyni and some of the other high-ranking clergymen had repeatedly called for Ayatollah Montazeri's designation as the future faghih. Many other top clerics, however, refused to endorse Montazeri.[5] In the midst of such disagreements, the Council of Experts met to address the issue on 14 July 1982.[6] Yet in the course of its semi-annual meetings during the next three years, it failed to designate a successor. Indeed, it was not until November 23, 1985 that Ayatollah Montazeri was officially announced to have been chosen by the Council as the next faghih. The deferral of the decision was a clear indication that the clerics had remained divided on the issue and that many of them had serious misgivings about Montazeri's candidacy. Even the way the announcement was made public did not diminish the controversy, for it was neither the

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[2]On March 27, 1989, in the most striking rearrangement of Iran's clerical leadership since the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeyni ousted his designated heir apparent, Hoseyn Ali Montazeri.

[3]According to article 5, the leader must be "an honest, virtuous, well-informed, courageous, efficient administrator, and a religious jurist, enjoying the confidence of the majority of the people as a leader." The constitution, however, does not specify how the credentials and reputation of aspirants are to be judged.

[4]The constitution does not specify the internal structure of the Council of Experts or the precise manner in which it would choose Khomeyni's successor or successors.

[5]For example, in November 1981, Khomeyni publicly mentioned Montazeri as his preferred successor; one year later Ayatollah Meshkini asserted in an interview that he saw no qualified individual fit enough to succeed Khomeyni as the faghih. See *International Iran Times*, November 20, 1981 and January 15, 1982; also Kayhan (Tehran daily), November 16, 1981, p. 1.

[6]In its first meeting the Council also elected Ayatollah Ali Meshkini as its chairman and Hashemi-Rafsanjani as its deputy chairman. These men still continue in their respective positions.

chairman nor the deputy chairman of the Council of Experts who broke out the news; rather Hojatoleslam Barikbin, a little-known cleric and the prayer leader of Qazvin, announced the news in that town's Friday mosque gathering.[7] It took two days for the story to be confirmed by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the deputy chairman of the Council.[8] The low-key announcement and the delaying tactics were apparently designed to avoid alienating other high-ranking ayatollahs and their supporters. But such measures did not go far in softening the high clergy's opposition.[9] In face of these criticisms Montazeri was forced to defend his position by revealing that he had already written to the Council of Experts that he ought not have been appointed as long as there were more eminent ayatollahs available, and that he had accepted the position only as a fait accompli.[10]

Since then, Montazeri has weathered several attempts to challenge his authority, but has thus far managed to retain his position as the future faghih. However, many factors still operate against his chances of becoming the faghih once Khomeyni dies. First, as of this writing, none of the senior ayatollahs has explicitly accepted Montazeri as the future leader and publicly addressed him as such. Even Khomeyni himself has remained silent on the issue and refrained from calling Montazeri his heir-apparent. Second, we have still not been told whether the Council of Expert's original decision of 1985 is final, or that it could reverse its opinion if circumstance require so. Finally, the succession issue is further complicated by what is generally referred to as Khomeyni's "Divine Political Testament."

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[7]For details see *Kayhan* (London weekly in Persian), November 28, 1985, p. 1; and December 5, 1985, p. 6.

[8]In his remarks, Rafsanjani asserted that during the three sessions the Council of Experts devoted to Montazeri's selection, he gathered no more than 50 votes. These would not have been enough to carry him over the top. However, Rafsanjani claimed that those who did not vote for Montazeri could not do so because they were absent from these meetings; he further claimed that eventually all the members somehow consented to Montazeri's selection. For details see *International Iran Times*, December 6, 1985, pp. 2, 12, 16.

[9]For example, within a few days of Montazeri's election many top *mojtaheds* publicly challenged the legitimacy of the election and declared their opposition to the entire selection process. These included Ayatollahs Sadegh Ruhani of Qom and Abolghasem Khoi of Najaf. Similarly, Grand Ayatollahs Golpayegani and Mar'ashi-Najafi refused to endorse the election. Meanwhile, many reports of anti-Montazeri demonstrations in Qom and other Iranian cities appeared in several Farsi and western newspapers at about this time. For details see *Ghiyam-e Iran*, No. 126, December 12, 1985, p. 6; *International Iran Times*, December 13, 1985, p. 3; *Kayhan* (London), No. 77, December 19, 1985, p. 1, 14; FBIS-SAS-85-243, *Daily Report*, December 18, 1985, p. I1-I2. Also *L'Express* (Paris), November 29-December 5, 1985, pp. 41–42; *Liberation* (Paris), December 5, 1985, p. 22, December 20, 1985, p. 26.

[10]*Kayhan* (London), No. 78, January 2, 1986, p. 16; *The Middle East* (monthly), February 1986, p. 11; *International Iran Times*, December 6, 1985, p. 15, November 29, 1985, p. 1, 12, and December 20, 1985, p. 16.

Khomeyni had originally handed this sealed document to Ali Meshkini on his election as the chairman of Council of Experts in July 1983 and instructed the Council to open it upon his death. Since then, it has been widely assumed that the faghih had issued specific instructions on succession in his will. However, on December 10, 1987, Khomeyni summoned Iran's top leadership to his residence and presented them his revised will, sealed under wax. One copy of the new document was again handed to Meshkini and the other hand delivered to Mashad to be deposited in the tomb of Imam Reza. Khomeyni gave no indication as to the contents of this will, nor did he hint why he had altered it. Immediately following this meeting, Montazeri had a separate audience with Khomeyni.[11]

In view of persistent opposition to Montazeri's original selection, Khomeyni might have used the document to advise Montazeri to step down as the future Supreme Leader upon his death. Should this speculation prove to be true, it would obviously have far reaching political consequences for the clerical network.

The protracted struggle around the succession issue should not be viewed in isolation. On one hand, it is directly tied to factional quarrels, waged particularly around the unresolved problem of land reform; Montazeri has been more accommodating than other Grand Ayatollahs to views of those who have called for a radical land redistribution policy. Their demands would presumably stand a better chance of success if the future faghih was supportive of their position. On the other hand, the succession issue is also related to the theological conflict of whether Shia Islam favors the concept of one Supreme Leader or that this position is too sacred to be given to a single living person.[12]

The succession issue is essentially a conflict among individuals, not groups. Here the players are a few senior *mojtaheds* who have always been ready to jump in whatever direction the wind seemed to be blowing. These *mojtaheds* possess tremendous freedom for political action, and they are rarely swayed by ideologically oriented factional groups. In addition, the Shia high clergy have a strong tradition of at least minimal cooperation in political matters, lest all be endangered. Thus, they may not let the succession issue become unmanageable or spill among lower clerical ranks and supporters. The existence of the Council of Experts means that a mechanism, no matter how imperfect, is now in place and all succession struggles may well be carried out behind its closed doors.

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[11]For details see *Kayhan Havai*, December 16, 1987, p. 1; and *International Iran Times*, Vol. 17, No. 40, December 18, 1987, p. 1, 14, 16.

[12]Several recent instances of conflict among senior clerics are examined by Akhavi, 1987, pp. 190–192.

Finally, the Islamic authorities have reportedly prepared elaborate security measures to prevent any coup attempts upon Khomeyni's death by the regime's opponents. For example, an emergency plan that is to be put into effect on Khomeyni's death was given a trial run in Tehran in February 1985. This included the closure of that city's major airports and positioning of specially trained IRGC units on all approaches to the capital. The Basij (Mobilization Army) and Komiteh (revolutionary committees) members were also dispatched to take over major thoroughfares in the capital in large numbers to discourage any possible lawlessness.[13]

Khomeyni's actual death would probably be kept secret until most of the internal power struggles have been decided.[14] The players would no doubt do everything they could to preserve a cover of secrecy and unanimity. Thus, the most dangerous period may not be immediately after Khomeyni's death, because uncertainty and shared fears may force the top *mojtaheds* to work together. Instead, internal political instability in Iran would come to the foreground a few months later when temporary alliances formed on personal, factional, or tactical grounds would gradually lose their former utility and thus lead to renewed power conflicts. Because none of the present contenders enjoys Khomeyni's immense prestige and legitimacy, the post-Khomeyni leadership would be weakened and authority further fragmented in this period.

Struggle Among Politicians

The succession struggle is not the only ongoing conflict that hinders coherency in the clerical network. Almost nonstop infighting waged by a large number of clerical politicians against one another has also been a major characteristic of Iran's theocratic regime.[15] This type of conflict has little to do with the issue of succession, having its own underlying causes. It often cuts across political or ideological alignments and

[13]In 1982 Khomeyni reportedly authorized his associates to keep the news of his death a secret as long as it was necessary for safeguarding the regime's interest if that was judged essential. Hashemi-Rafsanjani apparently alluded to this issue in an interview on Tehran Radio on February 10, 1983. For details see Taheri, 1986, p. 296; also Kayhan (London), #76, December 12, 1985, p. 23.

[14]News to this effect appeared in several Farsi-language publications in the United States and Europe in March-April 1985. Several of our interview subjects also asserted that they had witnessed parts of these preparations but that the reason behind these measures remained unknown to them at the time. See Taheri, 1986, p. 296.

[15]The following discussion of clerical politicians is based in part on analyzing and synthesizing various articles, speeches, and other writings of secondary clerics assembled from Persian-language publications and "illegal" pamphlets, and in part from bits and pieces of information from clerical interview subjects.

pits individual clerics or cliques against one another for no apparent reason other than largely personal disagreements. Here the major players are mostly middle to lower level clerics together with some of their bureaucratic and technocratic subordinates. These politicians are widely scattered among various government ministries, revolutionary organizations, and provincial and local administrative organs. As a whole, clerical politicians seem to be genuinely religious people driven by Islamic precepts and Khomeyni's desire to bring about meaningful changes in Iranian society. They constitute a dynamic and fast growing group. Many of them also have great authority among their supporters and enjoy a large degree of freedom in their posts.

These mostly young, ambitious, and energetic clerics invariably profess strong allegiance to Khomeyni and are loyal supporters of the regime. They usually obey Khomeyni's orders unquestionably, even if these go against their own best judgments. Thus, what may be wrong from their point of view is still justifiable for them if the Imam declares it to be in the interests of the regime and Islam. In addition, these middle level and low ranked clerics mostly exercise shared and delegated power and constantly seek to develop access to high ranking clerics. In the past ten years, these clerical politicians and their civilian allies have increasingly come to resemble each other in their outlooks, values, and behavior patterns.

These and many other common features, however, have largely remained ineffective in prompting clerical politicians to engage in purposeful political cooperation beyond certain broad issues. Instead, large numbers of these individuals continue to be motivated primarily by their own narrow personal, kinship, or financial interests. They exert continuous pressure on other individuals and cliques, thus making for a constant state of political competition, rivalry, and tension within the clerical establishment. This type of infighting often becomes so acrimonious that it draws higher level clerics into public partisan clashes. In such cases it is not uncommon for two or more high-ranked clerics, otherwise belonging to the same political or ideological faction, to suddenly start leveling public charges and countercharges against each other; they do this presumably to protect their friends or subordinates while enhancing their own prestige and popularity.

Episodes of this nature are too numerous to be examined here; some recent examples may illustrate the centrality of such conflicts within the clerical establishment. A notorious case involved two top clerics in late 1986: Ayatollah Musavi Khoeiniha, the current Prosecutor General, and Hojatoleslam Mohammad Reyshahri, the long-time Minister of Information and Intelligence. The two men, reportedly close

personal friends for many years, hold similar opinions about a variety of political, religious, and socioeconomic issues. At the same time, over the years they are known to have worked together in many tasks involving state security matters. The two men are commonly identified as key leaders of Iran's hard-line "radical" faction. Yet, for all of that, their ties were suddenly ruptured in early September 1986. The episode began about the middle of that year when people identified with Khoeiniha started a crackdown on a several minor regime officials whom they accused of having been involved in the 1981 bombing of the IRP headquarters in Tehran.[16] As the wave of arrests began to spread in summer of 1986, it affected several individuals with obscure family and kinship ties to Reyshahri as well as to the Minister of Heavy Industries, Behzad Nabavi. This prompted the latter two to join forces and mobilize their supporters against Khoeiniha, who was then accused of "irresponsibility" and "arbitrary" activities. Meanwhile, about 150 Majles deputies, mostly supporters of Reyshahri, Nabavi, and Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili, who had joined the infighting because of his own long-simmering feud with Khoeiniha, petitioned Khomeyni in an open letter asking for his intercession.[17] The episode ended later in that year when on Khomeyni's orders Hashemi-Rafsanjani was able to bring the warring individuals together and somehow settle the feud.[18]

Another typical case of such personal feuds occurred in the summer of 1986. The key players belonged to the so-called moderate or centrist group of clerics. At first, disagreements revolved around the issue of program apportionments between Tehran's two main TV channels. Later on it was transformed into a public debate about the proper role and place of Iran's TV in the country's Islamic education; in the course of this debate, however, the professional competence and Islamic devotion of TV's top managing board was questioned by some employees and others. Many of these were subsequently fired. But then the issue acquired religious coloring when in late July several middle-level clerics from Qom complained openly about the Iranian TV's refusal to nationally broadcast Qom's Friday prayer services. As it happened, those clerics were long-time supporters of Ayatollah Meshkini, who also served as the temporary Friday Prayer Imam of Qom; whereas Mohammad Hashemi, a brother of Iran's Majles Speaker Ali Akbar

[16]For details of this episode see *Kayhan* (London), No. 96, May 8, 1986, p. 1, 14; and June 5, 1986, p. 1, 2; *International Iran Times*, No. 760, June 13, 1986, p. 5, 14; also *Middle East Economic Digest*, May 24–30, 1986, p. 13.

[17]An abridged version of the text of this petition later appeared in the conservative Tehran newspaper *Resalat*, September 11, 1986.

[18]*Kayhan* (London), No. 116, September 25, 1986, p. 16, and No. 124, November 20, 1986, p. 15.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani, headed the country's radio and television establishment. As feelings of rancor continued over the summer, Meshkini was forced to join the conflict by declaring that he would no longer permit radio and TV representatives to set foot in Qom unless programs prepared by Qom's religious seminaries were broadcast directly over the national network.[19] Meshkini's "ultimatum" was apparently too much for the Hashemi brothers to swallow and they reacted promptly to the "undue intervention attempts." Eventually, the conflict was again mediated by Khomeyni when he called for creation of an arbitration committee to resolve the differences.[20]

Yet another similar rivalry, this time involving the conservative followers of Khomeyni, came into the open in late 1980. The rivalry revolved essentially around the control of religious funds and endowments in the central Iranian city of Isfahan. By 1983 this quarrel pitted two long-time local ayatollahs—Hoseyn Khademi and Jalal al-Din Taheri—against each other in a fierce struggle. In the course of the next few years, the infighting between the two rival clerical factions went on and off, while mediation efforts of several high-ranking clerics, including Montazeri, remained ineffective. Moreover, on several occasions the conflict went beyond the clerics themselves and involved supporters of each group within the local IRGC units and other revolutionary organizations. These elements did not hesitate to shoot at each other in the streets of Isfahan. The conflict ended in mid-1987 only when one of the two ayatollahs died of a heart attack.[21]

The above examples, together with scores of similar other cases, indicate that the struggle among middle to low level clerical politicians often surpasses and cuts across factional alignments based on socioeconomic or political grounds. There are many reasons for the emergence and prevalence of largely personal conflicts within the clerical network. For example, it should be remembered that in the Islamic Republic no single ministry or a state organ is charged with carrying out any major political, ideological, or socioeconomic task considered important enough by the clerical network. Instead, many agencies with parallel, and often overlapping, responsibilities and functions perform these tasks. An uncommonly large

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[19]Ayatollah Meshkini's outburst was reported widely and commented on by all major Tehran newspapers in mid-August 1986. Also see *Kayhan* (London), August 28, 1986, p. 16.

[20]A civilian interviewee claimed to have worked for several months in late 1986 as a junior clerk in this committee.

[21]The details of this episode have been reported by several sources. Among others, see FBIS-SAS-83-221, *Daily Report*, November 15, 1983; FBIS-SAS-83-251, *Daily Report*, December 29, 1983; FBIS-SAS-84-002, *Daily Report*, January 4, 1984; *Kayhan* (London), No. 128, December 18, 1986, p. 5, and No. 129, December 25, 1986, p. 16; also Schahgaldian, 1987, p. 33.

number of organizations, all led by clerical politicians, are caught up in fierce competition for money and specific missions.[22] Moreover, these state structures in which many thousands of lower level clergymen serve in various capacities are far from being fully institutionalized. There is still a fairly rapid turnover and reshifting of clerical personnel; and line of duty, jurisdictions, and organizational responsibilities between and within them are still undergoing changes of all kinds. Finally, the strength and practical day-to-day influence of many responsible clerical officials who head the governmental or quasi-revolutionary structures often do not correspond directly to their positions. Instead, their power appears to correspond directly to the degree of access they have—through kinship or other personal ties—to leading clerics.

This type of governmental/bureaucratic environment is hardly conducive to development of stable patterns of internal relationship and institutionalization of interest. Instead, it inevitably leads to prominence of personal ties and personality issues as important bases for formation of factional alliances and coalitions. This fluid situation has several other implications. For one, it points to a huge gap that has developed between the local and personal concerns of many clerical politicians and the pan-Islamic, national, and international issues with which many top clerics are mainly concerned. It also points to the political vulnerability of politicians to factional pressures exerted by higher clerical ranks. More important, since every socially relevant issue among the clerics must necessarily be defined in broad religious terms, these factional outbursts of personal nature often acquire religious and political coloring and are fought out under religious cloaks, further dividing cleric from cleric. The failure to coordinate matters of leadership and administration can ultimately affect control at the national level. Finally, conflicts of this nature often mystify and confuse foreign observers and publications; unwittingly reading too much into such discords, they may forecast the imminent collapse of old

[22]Examples of this struggle are provided by the long-standing competition and rivalry between the following organs: the Ministry of Housing vs. the Housing Crusade, Ministries of Agriculture and Plan and Budget Organization (reconstituted as a new ministry in 1987) vs. the Reconstruction Crusade (again turned into a separate ministry in 1987). The Foundation of the Oppressed and the Shahid (Martyrs) Foundation vs. Ministries of Commerce and Light Industry. The Literacy Movement Organization vs. Ministry of Education and Training. The Supreme Council for Educational Revolution vs. Ministry of Higher Education. The Gendarmerie vs. Tribal Basij. The regular professional military, especially the Ground Forces vs. the IRGC. The Ministry of Trade vs. the Supreme Council of Trade. The Revolutionary Committees vs. the National Police. The Supreme Cultural Revolution Council vs. the State University System. The Ministry of Interior vs. the Ministry of Information and Intelligence, and so on.

coalitions or herald the emergence of new alignments within the clerical establishment. This further confuses foreign decisionmakers about internal political developments in Iran.

Insiders vs. Outsiders

The third general type of intra-elite factionalism that continues to divide the clerical network revolves around the almost constant strife between those clerics who have become an integral part of the formal governmental apparatus and those who operate outside of it. Members of the first group, who may be referred to as "insiders," are found in all levels of Iranian bureaucracy: central, provincial, and local. As salaried government officials, they are strongest in the executive branch, especially so in the ministries of education, interior, information, Islamic guidance, finances, and the IRGC. Their weight and influence are also felt in descending order within the legislative and judicial branches of the government.[23]

The second category of clerics, referred to as "outsiders," are most influential in traditional religious organizations together with a large number of revolutionary and quasi-governmental organizations.[24] The latter include the Islamic Revolution Committees that are still nominally a part of the Ministry of Interior, the IRGC (as distinct from the ministry of the same name), the Basij (Mobilization Army), various Islamic societies and associations, together with a host of "Supreme Councils" and "Crusades." The strongholds of the "outsiders" also include numerous large welfare, social service, economic, and commercial establishments known commonly as "foundations."[25]

The reasons for the ongoing conflict between "insiders" and "outsiders" must be sought in the way the clerical network has come to control Iran's state apparatus. Early on, when the clerics attained political

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[23]Typical clerical core members of this camp include Hojatoleslams Emami-Kashani, Movahedi-Kermani, Mehdi Karrubi, Nategh Nuri, Ali Rabaninezhad, Gholam-Reza Safai, Seyyed Kazem Akrami, Mohammad Reyshahri, and Abolqasem Khazali.

[24]Typical leading clerical members of this camp include Ayatollahs Montazeri, Ahmad Janati, Azari Qomi, Hojati-Kermani, and Hojatoleslams Mohammad Ali Rahmani, Vaez Tabasi, Ahmad Salek, Mohammad Moghtadari, and Hadi Ghaffari.

[25]Many of these "foundations" are huge economic/commercial conglomerates that own hundreds of manufacturing, trading, agroindustrial, and other companies. For example, in 1987 the Foundation for the Oppressed owned, wholly or partially, some 500 companies and employed about 125,000 people. In the Iranian fiscal year March 1987 to March 1988, it operated on a budget of no less than U.S. $8.4 billion. That of the Martyrs Foundation in the same period amounted to over U.S. $5.4 billion. The Foundation for the Warstricken and many others also have comparable budgets. See *Kayhan Havai* (Tehran), No. 714, February 16, 1987, p. 10; No. 719, March 25, 1987, p. 4; No. 720, April 8, 1987, p. 4; and No. 725, May 13, 1987, p. 11.

power, they did not so much transform as simply strive to infiltrate the existing governmental structures. In the course of the next few years the new rulers succeeded in purging or otherwise neutralizing the upper bureaucratic echelons and placed their own members and civilian supporters in positions of influence. Nevertheless, the old bureaucratic apparatus remained more or less in place. More important, as the insiders gradually strengthened their administrative positions, they themselves came to advocate orderly behavior and governmental supremacy. Thus, the conservatism of the old bureaucracy and its customary practice of attaching great importance to regulations and procedures have apparently softened the more revolutionary inclinations of the insiders.[26]

As noted earlier, aside from controlling the governmental apparatus, the new regime also created an array of new organizations. Many of these not only came to duplicate the functions of the governmental personnel, they have emerged as formidable organizations of mass mobilization, Islamic education, and patronage. Thus, similar to insiders, the outsiders too constitute a broad category of clerics. Space limitations prevent discussion of specific issues around which these two groups fight, but certain of their aspects need to be considered briefly. First the insiders have integrated several revolutionary organizations into the state apparatus.[27] In other cases, they have succeeded only in introducing various measures to supervise their budgets and to make them somewhat more answerable to governmental authorities. Nevertheless, the process seems to be erratic and it is occasionally reversed.[28] The multiplicity of revolutionary organizations makes centralization a difficult task. Second, the outsiders continue to jealously guard their privileges and autonomy; regardless of their political ideologies and postures they seem to be united in resisting most integration efforts, particularly when the problem of financial control comes to the foreground. Third, while the infighting often prevents rational planning in socioeconomic matters, slows down various social reforms, and hinders the institutionalization of the regime, it does not by itself threaten the bases of clerical power in Iran. On the contrary, quarrels of this nature, which are often magnified in the Majles debates or in

[26]The metamorphosis of former revolutionary elements into full fledged bureaucrats has repeatedly been criticized by Ayatollah Montazeri and other outsiders. Examples of such criticisms appear in *International Iran Times*, September 21, 1984, p. 15; *Kayhan* (London), No. 125, November 27, 1986, p. 15.

[27]Examples of these include the Reconstruction Crusade, the Housing Committee, the Ministry of Revolutionary Guards, the Revolutionary Committees, and many others.

[28] For example, the Agriculture Ministry was merged into the Reconstruction Crusade Ministry in the summer of 1987. For details, see *International Iran Times*, No. 809, May 22, 1987, p. 15.

the country's news media, often serve to stimulate public attention and concern about domestic socioeconomic matters. Finally, many issues of disagreement between the two camps provide ample opportunity for clerics of different political persuasions to play upon these issues and, in the process, attempt to settle personal scores against their opponents. In such cases, many affected lower level clerics and civilian bureaucrats quickly gravitate around a few influential spokesmen, only to abandon them soon after the issue dies down. Thus, as a pattern, most factional struggles between the insiders and outsiders are fought out on an ad-hoc basis; they rarely coincide with the more deep-seated political or ideological cleavages.

CURRENT POLITICAL COALITIONS

Within the complicated web of Iranian politics, it is possible to distinguish three broad political and ideological currents. The conservatives and extremists are often diametrically opposed to each other. The pragmatists have so far refrained from direct conflict and have refused to support or oppose either of the two others. Although these three political tendencies are clearly identifiable within the various strata of the clerics and their junior civilian partners, they should be approached with caution for they are all both continuous and changeable; they constantly absorb new infusions while some constituent elements may be eroded or sloughed off. Also, at times important overlaps separate a particular group from others within the same category. Consequently, these factional classifications are only approximate demarcations separating broad tendencies from one another.

THE CONSERVATIVE CAMP

Within the context of Iranian domestic political life, a conservative cleric may best be defined as an individual who is a true believer on matters of Shia religious doctrine, but who is often willing to tolerate other opinions on social and economic issues. However, on one end of the conservative continuum are clerics who maintain profoundly conservative, if not reactionary, value preferences when it comes to such matters as secular education, social egalitarianism, and women's rights. On the other end are those who are fairly flexible on these issues while rigidly opposed to governmental intervention in social and economic affairs. As a whole, what tends to unite most conservatives is their opposition to Communist ideology and participation of revolutionary socialists in Iranian political life. In addition, the conservatives are

united in calling for a normalcy of governmental administrative procedures and for a softening of revolutionary zeal by responsible officials.

Although it is extremely difficult to classify Iran's top elite figures into specific political and ideological categories, a fairly representative example of the conservative type can be found in Ayatollah Montazeri. A review of this influential cleric's life and deeds may help us to better understand the complexities of Iran's factional configurations. In terms of their regional and ethnic affiliations, most conservative clerics belong to the Persian element of the population, and the rural peasantry together with such urban centers as Qom, Mashad, Yazd, and Kerman seem to be their primary centers of support.

Hoseyn Ali Montazeri was born in 1922 in the township of Najafabad, near the city of Isahahan, and was encouraged by his father, a rich farmer, to become a cleric from an early age. For his theological education, he was sent to Qom, where he apparently displayed some talent for theological discourse and was appointed to a junior teaching position by his former teacher, the conservative Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi, who had risen to preeminence in the world of Shiite Islam. There, too, he met a fiery cleric, Ayatollah Khomeyni, also from the margins of the central Iranian desert, with romantic notions about justice, independence, and the golden age of Islam. The friendship between the two men blossomed and Montazeri became a disciple for life. Khomeyni arranged for Montazeri to marry his widowed sister.

In the early 1960s Montazeri taught at the Qom Feyziyeh seminary and was active in the anti-government clashes of June 1963, which turned that seminary into a symbol of clerical struggle against the Shah's regime. In 1974, when Khomeyni was forced into exile in Iraq for inciting his followers to riot in opposition to the Shah's policies, Montazeri was arrested, maltreated, and imprisoned along with many other prominent clerical opponents. His treatment apparently caused him a nervous disorder that remains with him and serves him as a badge of service to the Islamic revolution.[29] He was released in November 1978 during the revolutionary upheaval.

Soon after the revolution, Montazeri emerged as one of the main figures within the clerical network. In early 1979, he was elected to the chairmanship of the first Council of Experts, but he was completely overshadowed by other clergymen and became the subject of daily ridicule in millions of homes for being seen on television to be napping during the most important debates or making irrelevant remarks. In 1980, however, he became the supreme guide of Iran's theological

[29] *The Middle East* (London), April 1987, p. 17.

colleges, thus being able to appoint representatives to the councils that ran these colleges.[30] By this time he had also come to be the Friday Prayer Imam of Qom. Ayatollah Khomeyni also delegated greater religious and political authority to his former pupil, authorizing him to appoint members to the Supreme Judicial Council and putting him in charge of the secretariat of the Friday Prayer Imams. Bolstered by the official media's campaign, Khomeyni's open support, and his own active interest in the daily affairs of the government, Ayatollah Montazeri later emerged as one of the most powerful clerics in Iran. However, in a most striking rearrangement of Iran's theocratic leadership since the revolution, Khomeyni ousted his designated heir apparent on March 27, 1989, after telling Montazeri that the leadership of the Islamic Republic "is a very grave responsibility that requires endurance more than your capacity."[31]

Unlike the rest of the Grand Ayatollahs who have maintained a careful distance from the policies of the Islamic republic, Montazeri from the very outset maintained an active profile in most aspects of the Islamic Republic and involved himself in as many politically important issues as possible. This active profile was reinforced by Montazeri's eagerness to express his opinion on various issues and to give his "advice" and recommendations on different matters. He came to represent a certain tendency within the Iranian regime, and his positions on various issues won him allies as well as opponents.

Like many other high-ranking clerics, Montazeri expressed many seemingly contradictory opinions throughout the years. However, like many other conservatives, he was most consistent on economic issues. For example, he repeatedly called for a freer hand for the private sector. This view was often voiced as subtle opposition to Prime Minister Musavi's efforts to curb inflation and to aid the "deprived" (*mostazafan*) at the expense of Bazaari merchants. Montazeri argued that "if the government becomes more active in giving more room to the private sector certainly many of the problems concerning the new personnel, excessive hiring by the government and related procedures will no longer be a responsibility of the government and the government will be able to carry out its essential duties."[32] Similarly, he also stated that:

> [A]s much as possible the government must not intervene directly in the work that is outside its jurisdiction, such as the distribution of nonessential merchandise. . . . It is the businessman himself who has

[30]Hiro, 1985, pp. 264–265.

[31]New York Times, March 29, 1989

[32]*Bours* (Tehran), January 14, 1985, pp. 1–4.

> both greater incentive to trade in and deliver merchandise to the one who really needs it. . . . In my view, if the government turned most domestic and foreign trade over to the . . . commercial and business classes . . . the people would be happier.[33]

Such statements were clear indications not only of Montazeri's desire to see a freer market economy, but also his disapproval of the policies pursued by Prime Minister Musavi. Musavi has repeatedly called for a campaign against economic deprivation and profiteering by merchants.[34] President Khamenei, like his prime minister, has reiterated this policy by declaring that fighting poverty and supporting the oppressed are among important goals of the Islamic revolution of Iran.[35] Such attacks on the entrepreneurial classes drew equally sharp criticisms by Montazeri, who was seen as one of the main spokesman for the Bazaaris. In one of his sharpest remarks, he urged the people that "if someone wished to introduce Marxist economics in the guise of Islam to society, it is necessary for others to explain this deviation and distortion and not allow others to be misguided."[36]

Despite Ayatollah Montazeri's advocacy of a freer market and a less interventionist economic policy by the government, he repeatedly called for the export of the Islamic revolution abroad. This radical approach to foreign policy resulted in Montazeri's giving frequent audiences to a stream of foreign students, diplomatic dignitaries, and Iranian diplomats stationed abroad. In one such meeting with Foreign Minister Velayati, Montazeri argued, "We must utilize every opportunity to contact the people of the world in order to promote the true face of the revolution and its divine and populist goals."[37] He also announced the opening of a special bank account set up to strengthen and aid various Islamic movements, claiming that other Moslems' "problems are our own."[38] A different feature of Montazeri's approach to foreign policy was his conspicuously soft criticism of the United States, especially in light of recent revelations about secret U.S.-Iranian contacts. This abstinence from lashing out at the "Great Satan" was important when considered in the context of the broader factional groupings of the time within the regime. Many prominent regime officials, such as Prime Minister Musavi, have not welcomed U.S.-Iranian contacts and have argued that the possibility of further contacts in the future is only

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[33]*Sobh-e Azadegan* (Tehran), August 28, 1984, p. 12.

[34]For Musavi's remarks, see for example, FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 16, 1987, p. 43.

[35]See FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, March 9, 1987, p. 31.

[36]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 14, 1987, p. 38.

[37]*Sobhe-Azadegan*, January 8, 1985, p. 16.

[38]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 23, 1987, p. 41.

minimal.[39] Majles Speaker Rafsanjani, however, has on numerous occasions declared that as soon as the United States abandons its "mischiefs," it can establish normal relations with Iran.[40] Montazeri's silence regarding Tehran's unending anti-American rhetoric was indicative of his affinity to Rafsanjani. Furthermore, it highlighted Montazeri's pragmatic realism and his belief in the fruitlessness and possiby adverse consequences of spreading propaganda against the United States.

Ayatollah Montazeri's often radical foreign policy notions found their expression along with a surprisingly conservative advocacy of the normalization of governmental procedures and processes. Faithfully reflecting the opinions of the conservative camp in this respect, Montazeri basically argued that the Islamic Republic is now well established and the regime has been firmly rooted within the society. Consequently, it is time for the government to routinize the political process, abandon revolutionary zeal and excesses, welcome constructive criticism instead of dismissing it as mere counter-revolutionary sentiment,[41] pay more attention to the country's shortcomings,[42] allow more exiles to come home, replace slogans with constructive efforts,[43] have better qualified and more judicious officials,[44] pay greater attention to the emotional and the psychological needs of the people,[45] and work harder to win the population's satisfaction.[46] In pursuit of such goals, Montazeri tried to become involved in the process of government as much as possible without appearing to be intervening directly in the affairs of the executive branch, thus upsetting the Prime Minister and the President. In his numerous meetings with various government officials, he usually gave "recommendations" and advice. However, Montazeri's directives regarding the government's appropriate policies were not particularly flattering to the current heads of the executive, notably Prime Minister Musavi and President Khomeyni. Indeed, Montazeri's periodic recommendations to government officials to be more cautious and behave properly with the people were, in actual fact, criticisms leveled against the extremist faction's zealous pursuit of avowedly revolutionary goals on behalf of the oppressed and the deprived.

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[39]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, March 2, 1987, p. 48.
[40]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 21, 1987, p. 23.
[41]*Kayhan* (Tehran), September 18, 1984, p. 22.
[42]*Sobh-e Azadegan*, December 15, 1984, p. 2.
[43]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 22, 1987, p. 26.
[44]*Sobh-e Azadegan*, October 26, 1983, p. 46.
[45]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 23, 1987, p. 24.
[46]*Kayhan* (Tehran), August 26, 1986, p. 17.

THE EXTREMIST CAMP

Like the conservatives, what may be conveniently called the extremist camp is far from being a unitary category. Those exhibiting strong extremist tendencies belong to many more or less like-minded but distinct subgroups. On one end of the extremist continuum, there are those who advocate a strongly centralized government, complete nationalization of major industries, tight controls over commercial activities, and expropriation of large land holdings.[47] Those holding such views exercise great influence in the Majles, among the Friday Prayer Imams, and in several governmental ministries; this group also includes a large and influential cluster of nonclerics. Most members of the latter group are young, often university educated (many in the United States), people who despite their attachment to Shia Islamic values show a generally more accommodating attitude toward the Soviet bloc and leftist ideologies. Many of these people are former revolutionary activists and supporters of various Islamic Marxist underground groups of the late 1970s.[48] On the other end of the extremist continuum are those clerics who, despite their advocacy of strong governmental authority, tend to de-emphasize control over commerce, land expropriation, or free enterprise, in part on religious grounds.[49] In general, members and sympathizers of the extremist coalition seem to be strongest in Tehran, Tabriz, Rasht, Qazvin, Zanjan, and other major Iranian urban centers.

Again, many of the extremists analyze international and domestic politics in terms of "oppressor" and "oppressed," regard Islam as a revolutionary ideology, and advocate the "export" of the Islamic revolution. Clerics of this persuasion are found mostly in non-governmental revolutionary organizations and have been active in the recently dissolved IRP and in places where Iranian foreign policy is formulated.[50] In contrast to these, many other influential clerics are somewhat more pragmatic. Although they do not reject the "revolutionary" qualities of Islam or the imperative of supporting the economically deprived classes, they de-emphasize the economic interpretation of "oppression"

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[47]Key clerics showing such sympathies include Ayatollah Khoeiniha, Hojatoleslams Abdolmajid Moadikhah, Mahmud Doai, Ahmad Gharavi, Hasan Abdo, Fazlollah Mahalati, and others.

[48]This group includes Behzad Nabavi, Mohsen Rezai, Mir Hoseyn Musavi, Ali Akbar Parvaresh, Mahmud Ruhani, Masud Khatami, Kamal al-Din Nikravesh, Sabeh Zanganeh, and many others.

[49]Key clerics holding such views include Ayatollah Abdolkarim Musavi Ardabili, Ali Khamenei, and Mohammad Reyshahri.

[50]These have included Hojatoleslams Gholam-Reza Rezvani, Abdolmajid Moadikhah, Mehdi Hashemi, Hadi Ghaffari, and others.

and call for proper implementation of social reforms. This subgroup evinces a greater readiness to forge accommodations on specific issues with the pragmatic camp.

Representative examples of the extremist category include such important figures as President Khamenei and Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi. Both have supporters and proxies throughout the extremist continuum and within various governmental and revolutionary organizations. The point has already been made that the ruling clerical network both embodies and manipulates individuals over institutions and principles. It is in this context that Khamenei, Musavi, Montazeri, Rafsanjani, and many others have become more important than the mere powers granted them by the virtue of their offices. The following analysis is not a study of these people so much as individual political players but rather as symbols of dominant political trends in the Iranian polity.

Khamenei

Born in Mashhad in 1940, in a deeply religious family, Khamenei studied religious sciences in Qom under Khomeyni, eventually achieving the rank of Hojatoleslam. In 1964 he returned to Mashhad, where his anti-state activities led to his imprisonment at least six times in the course of the next 15 years. He was freed in late 1978 as a result of the Pahlavi regime's general amnesty immediately before its collapse. Following the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Khamenei soon emerged as one of the main figures of the new regime. In September 1980, he became Secretary General and a Central Committee member of the IRP and was subsequently appointed by Khomeyni as the Friday Prayer Leader of Tehran. During this period he became familiar with matters relating to military operations owing to his post in the Ministry of Defense as a liaison between the Revolutionary Council and the cabinet. He also headed the political-ideological branch of the military. This early exposure to military matters greatly benefitted him, as he became the commander of the Revolutionary Guards in 1980, later being appointed as Ayatollah Khomeyni's personal representative to the Supreme Defense Council. He escaped an assassination attempt in June 1981, in which his right arm was injured. Following the assassination of President Rajai on August 30, 1981, Khamenei was elected president in the elections held in the following October. He was reelected in the October 1985 elections, after which he somewhat unwillingly once again chose his first-term Prime Minister Mir Husseyn Musavi. In October 1981, the Majles had by a vote of 80 to 74 and 34 absentees rejected Khamenei's first choice Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, who

was subsequently given the Foreign Ministry portfolio. Khamenei's alliance with Velayati has continued to this date.

Khamenei's prominence within this camp evolved because of his position on various issues and his promotion of policies that often contradict the positions taken by the conservative alignment. Though in a much less forceful manner than many of his colleagues, Khamenei has advocated radical land reform throughout his two terms. He has also seen to and implemented the nationalization of foreign trade, thus substantially reducing the economic powers of the Bazaaris and placing himself in opposition to the numerous "suggestions" Montazeri has issued. His rhetoric against the West, especially the United States, has been noncompromising, in contrast to Rafsanjani's often conciliatory gestures and Montazeri's silence on the issue. Again, not as consistently as other key clerics, Khamenei has also advocated strong retribution for those who oppose the regime. Evidence suggests that he was determined to turn the IRP into a base of support for himself, constantly praising the party and trying to raise its status and prestige.

He has similarly tried to cultivate strong ties with the more moderate regular military at the expense of the IRGC, but the dissolution of the IRP in June 1987 was probably a severe blow to Khamenei's political fortunes. One of the most important postures placing him in the extremist lineup has been his advocacy of greater government control over the economy. Moreover, the government's policy of support for the "oppressed" is often proposed by the President, but its actual architect and more vocal proponent seems to be the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the two men's economic outlook is essentially similar. Lacking Prime Minister Musavi's zeal and doctrinaire approach, Khamenei has maintained that

> If the government does not establish policy, then there are chances of abuse, corruption, and the enrichment of a small group of wealthy individuals in the private sector. The government is accountable in this respect and therefore cannot endure such activities. It has to establish policies regarding these issues.[51]

Khamenei has repeatedly denied that his position on the economy leads to discord among himself, Rafsanjani, and Montazeri.[52] Nevertheless, while standing in contrast to Montazeri's conservative position, Khamenei's advocacy of an interventionist economic system substantially coalesces with the views of Rafsanjani. For many reasons, the factions behind Rafsanjani and Khamenei, however, have thus far not joined forces to solidify their mutual interest. For

[51] *Kayhan* (Tehran), September 22, 1984, p. 2.

[52] For example, see his remarks appearing in *Kayhan* September 22, 1984, p. 2.

example, Khamenei has constantly tried to raise the stature and prestige of the regular military among both the public and the government officials, forge ties with the officers' corps, and turn the professional military into a support base for himself. In line with this objective, Khamenei has used even insignificant occasions to heighten his visibility in the armed forces. Exemplary of his approach is one of his speeches before graduating cadets in a military college in Tehran in February 1983. He declared that "You cannot find many instances in our history when being part of the armed forces is so honorable, because our armed forces are now defending our country's honor, credit, independence, and territorial integrity.[53] However, Khamenei's cultivation of strong ties with the regular military has often compounded his relationship with Rafsanjani, who from the outset has spared no effort to forge a similar bond between himself and the IRGC. In general, despite his seemingly contradictory positions, Khamenei can be said to symbolize the pragmatic and moderate elements within the overall extremist category.

Musavi

Within the same factional lineup as President Khamenei is his Prime Minister, Mir Hoseyn Musavi, who strongly advocates a centralized economy and has been highly critical of the United States. Since he is the actual architect of the country's economic policies, however, the Prime Minister's position within the extremist alignment is based almost exclusively on his economic policies. The centrality of Musavi's role in the country's general economic framework places him in the heart of the controversy raging in Iran over the country's economy. Despite this immense importance, however, it does not appear that the Prime Minister is a significant *political actor* in the regime's factional drama. Musavi is mainly a technocrat with few higher political aspirations for the future. This assertion is based on a lack of effort on his part to forge alliances and loyalties within the regime's various organs similar to what Khamenei and Rafsanjani have done. In fact, he is said to have resigned from the IRP as early as 1984. As he has already served two terms in office, he is unlikely to be nominated as the Prime Minister again.

During his tenure as the Prime Minister, Musavi religiously followed a doctrinaire and unpopular economic policy that heavily relies on austerity measures. The Prime Minister consistently justified the need for austerity because of the war and to achieve domestic self-

[53]The text of Khamenei's speech appears in JPRS-NEA, March 15, 1983.

sufficiency. The crux of the Prime Minister's economic program was summarized in a speech he made in the summer of 1986:

> We have to save and to economize in order to stand on our own feet. We have to cut down our consumption, particularly of imported goods. We must rely on our domestically manufactured goods.[54]

This policy has aroused the anger of some segments of society. Since the West was the source of material and cultural orientation before the revolution, the public is usually resentful of having to substitute mostly lower-quality Iranian goods for those previously imported from Western countries. Thus, there is widespread disapproval and even resentment in the cities toward the Prime Minister's economic policies. Politically more important, however, is the opposition of the Bazaaris to Musavi's policies. Reliance on domestically manufactured goods instead of on imports from abroad means a transfer of economic power away from the Bazaaris and into the hands of the government. Goods that were once imported by the Bazaaris are instead produced by industrial complexes owned or controlled by the government. Thus the Bazaaris are put under economic pressure. The squeeze on the Bazaaris has been far more abrupt than this, however. Going further then merely branding them as "capitalists" and "hoarders," the Prime Minister has used his power to ensure that the Bazaaris do not gain any substantial political and economic power.[55] As a substitute for slackening oil revenues the Prime Minister has adamantly emphasized, and has implemented, a tax system burdensome on the Bazaaris.[56] Under open pressure coming from many extremist factions, the government has also launched repeated anti-profiteering campaigns aimed at disrupting the lucrative black market and reducing the inflation rate.[57] The natural victims of such campaigns were again the Bazaaris. In presenting the 1365 [March 21, 1986 to March 20, 1987] budget to the Majles, Musavi pledged that "the government defends the gathering of small capital and work force within legal companies.[58] This apparently excludes the Bazaaris, who are commonly perceived to be financial magnates.

Along with many clerics and civilian groups within this factional alignment, the Prime Minister has also been harshly critical of the United States and has repeatedly dismissed the possibility of a *rap-*

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[54]See JPRS-NEA, June 25, 1986.

[55]See FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 16, 1987.

[56]Musavi's opinions on new taxation measures are reflected in many of his speeches. For a representative example, see FBIS-SA, January 3, 1985.

[57]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 8, 1987.

[58]FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, December 5, 1986.

prochement between Iran and the United States.[59] More recently, while Rafsanjani has more than once hinted at possible relations with the United States following the disclosure of secret U.S.-Iranian contacts, Musavi has vocally criticized the American government and even implicated Vice President George Bush in the affair.[60] Musavi has also recently warned the public to beware of the enemy's "cultural attacks," a charge made against the Western countries mostly in the first five years after the revolution.[61] Finally, he has similarly argued that "we should not think only about our own interests, ignoring the fate of Moslem nations and those under oppression." These positions regarding the United States and "oppressed Moslems" concur with those of many others in both the extremist and conservative coalitions.

THE PRAGMATISTS

The third broad category of ruling Shia clerics and their subordinate civilian functionaries comprises those whose political pragmatism, more than anything else, sets them apart from many of their colleagues. A close analysis of the social and political positions taken by many members of this category makes it possible to identify at least two types of pragmatists among the clerical network. The first consists of those individuals who remain firmly opposed to ideologues and theoreticians of all types. Instead, they seek to retain political power and strengthen their influence among the people by taking public positions most popular at the time. This type of cleric usually justifies his shifting political stands in terms of the traditionally sanctioned Shia principle under which genuine leaders are expected to follow the wishes and the consensus of the masses of believers.

Although many leading pragmatic clerics may otherwise be perceived as "time-servers" or "opportunists" in the West, in the Iranian political context little or no negative value is attached to such behavior. On the contrary, in the intensely personal and fluid world of Iranian politics, this type of opportunistic behavior is often taken as a sign of an individual's political independency, sincerity in service to the people, and personal moral strength to remain above narrow factional causes.[62]

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[59]For his remarks, see FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, November 5, 1986.

[60]For some examples of such contradictory statements, see FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, 20 February and April 21, 1987.

[61]See FBIS-NEA, *Daily Report*, June 25, 1987.

[62]This same attitude was also strongly noticeable among many of our clerical interview subjects. When pressed to explain reasons behind instances of swift political shifts of specific clerical leaders, most of them spoke of such factors as "internal environment," "political necessity," "wisdom," political acumen," "Islam's interests," and the like. In

As a whole, and in line with the changing internal political environment of the past several years, many of today's pragmatists have formerly been genuine political moderates who have taken more extremist social and political positions since about the early 1980s.

The second type of political pragmatist includes a fairly large number of better educated and more experienced middle-level clerics who have chosen to remain disengaged and aloof from factional infighting as well as from political controversies. Many of these pragmatists have a tendency to be decidedly less ideological and rhetorical than others and seem to seek to promote their personal fortunes by a willingness to cooperate with the dominant political force of the time. In general, many such individuals hold managerial positions in the country's public educational and banking systems, several ministries, and within the more scientifically oriented public and private institutions. At present, many of the pragmatist clerics congregate either around several elderly first-rank ayatollahs such as Mohammad Reza Golpaygani, or major political practitioners such as Hashemi-Rafsanjani. As for the regional basis of the pragmatic camp, many of their leaders are in positions of influence in Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz. Compared with the major and middle-level urban centers, the popular support for this camp seems to be weakest among the peasantry.

Rafsanjani

An extremely important and representative example of the politically pragmatist clerical leader is Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Born into a rich rural family in the village of Behraman on the edge of the central Iranian desert, he took his clerical name of Rafsanjani from the nearby town of Rafsanjan where he received his early schooling. For his theological education he went to the shrine city of Qom where he became a devotee of Ayatollah Khomeyni and a student of Ayatollah Montazeri. He soon became a junior but extremely active member of a group of clerics who opposed the Shah's foreign policy as well as his internal reform programs. Under the monarchy, Rafsanjani spent many years in prison and in internal exile. During this period, he is said to have impressed the older clerics among his fellow inmates and became a key figure in organizing underground anti-Shah clerical groups. At the same time, when Iran's economy was going through a boom period following the sharp increase in the price of oil in the early 1970s, Rafsanjani apparently forged lasting business associations with

contrast, the thoroughly secularized and Western-educated Iranian interviewees and several non-Iranian observers repeatedly brought out the issue of opportunism and "political immorality" as important characteristics of the ruling clerical network.

a number of wealthy Bazaar merchants and became a partner in their construction, real estate, and export-import businesses.

Since the early 1980s, Rafsanjani has been a major player in the regime's factional conflicts. Aside from being the speaker of Majles since 1980, he is also the Acting Commander of the Iranian military machine (both the regular professional military and the IRGC), the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Experts, the Imam's Representative on the Supreme Defense Council, and the temporary Prayer Leader of Tehran. Often regarded as the most powerful day-to-day leader of Iran, Rafsanjani is a most shrewd clerical politician.[63] He has consistently tried to place himself above various factional discords and has worked hard to project his image of being a pragmatic problem-solver uninterested in petty personal or political rivalries. At the same time, he has been assiduous in cultivating and keeping friends across various clerical factions and power centers. He has managed to place his relatives and confidants in key positions within vital institutions. For example, he has developed a substantial support base among the Revolutionary Guardsmen and succeeded in placing his brother-in-law, Mohsen Rafighdust, as the Minister of the IRGC in November 1982. This arrangement effectively counterbalanced Khamenei's influence in the regular military. Similarly, one of Rafsanjani's five brothers also heads the Iranian Radio and Television Organization, a powerful and potentially sensitive median at Rafsanjani's disposal.[64]

It is extremely difficult to ascertain where Rafsanjani stands in regard to many social and political issues. As noted earlier, this lack of clarity arises primarily from the fact that he has often expressed seemingly contradictory views on many issues and at the same time refused to circumscribe his scope of actions by rigid doctrines and beliefs. His positions are often taken in accordance with means to maximize his own political interests and longevity. Despite this aspect of Rafsanjani's political behavior, and as far as it could be determined, he has consistently advocated a number of policies. For example, in the past several years Rafsanjani has been highly supportive of Montazeri. Often praising his acumen, perceptiveness, and dedication, Rafsanjani has repeatedly called Montazeri "the strongest arm of the revolution after the Imam and the

[63]Rafsanjani's sparsity of facial hair due to his Mongolian descent has earned him the nickname "Kuseh" or the Shark (also the Eunuch) in Persian; this reinforces his reputation for shrewdness.

[64]Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khomeyni are said to be half-brothers. Khomeyni's mother reportedly married four times, and she is said to have given birth to Ali Akbar Rafsanjani through her third marriage. See *Iran Press Service*, in English, No. 36, September 4, 1981, pp. 11–12.

hope of our nation."[65] Montazeri's recent book, *Islamic Government*, also received high praise from Rafsanjani, who called it "a model for government."[66]

However, Rafsanjani has often refused to support many policies advocated by Montazeri. For example, Montazeri supports the Bazaaris, but Rafsanjani has vehemently attacked them. Referring to the Bazaari elements, Rafsanjani once declared, "Our enemies, through . . . hoarding and creating long lines have caused tensions."[67] Again, unlike Montazeri, he has argued that "great sums of capital should not be entrusted to the private sector giving [the Bazaaris] leverage against the government.[68] Despite his public anti-Bazaari rhetoric, and in a characteristic manner, Rafsanjani has consistently cultivated many merchants and succeeded in maintaining excellent ties with the Bazaar. Similarly, Rafsanjani has repeatedly urged the strengthening of the Foundation for the Oppressed and its acquisition of industrial complexes away from big industrialists.[69] Although Rafsanjani has consistently attacked both traditional mercantile and modern business classes and forces, he has not necessarily been supportive of similar criticisms leveled against these forces by other leaders, including Khamenei and Musavi. On the contrary, usually when leading individuals identified with given factions publicly criticize opposing groups, Rafsanjani comes close to defending the accused publicly and is quick to call for moderation and understanding.

In regard to Iran's foreign affairs and its international economic relations, Rafsanjani has often correctly been labeled as a genuine pragmatist. Indeed, up until very recently, he was one of the few clerical leaders who consistently called for strengthening Iran's economic ties with the Western countries (Japan and the West Europeans in particular) along with the Third World and nonaligned states. Again, Rafsanjani has been one of the few figures in Iran openly calling for the advisability of normalizing ties with the United States, if and when the U.S. government abandoned its "domineering attitude" toward the Islamic Republic. This position has often placed Rafsanjani in direct opposition to the extremists, the Prime Minister and the cabinet in particular. Such a position is seemingly a further evidence of Rafsanjani's political realism as he and a many like-minded clerical politicians realize that Iran could considerably enhance its future

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[65]See *Ettela'at* (Tehran Daily in Persian), December 21, 1983, p. 2.

[66]See FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, June 10, 1987, p. I-11.

[67]*Ettela'at*, December 21, 1983, p. 2.

[68]*Kayhan* (Tehran), January 23, 1985, p. 26.

[69]Ibid.

military might as well as its postwar reconstruction efforts if it moderated or abandoned its hostile attitude toward the U.S. government.

THE ORGANIZED INSIDERS

The fluidity of the Iranian political scene and elusive nature of factional configurations within the ruling clerical network is both compounded and, to a degree, counteracted by the existence of several politically organized and specific groups. While many of these, which may be referred to as "organized insiders," constitute an integral part of the clerical establishment, they remain far from resembling political parties or lobbying groups in the Western sense. Neither are they merely personal followings of this or that influential cleric without whom such organizations soon fall apart. On the contrary, many organized insiders have in time developed their own internal structures, ideological preferences, and practical political objectives; in many cases they also have their regular membership and distinct sources of support.

These groups have thus far been in no position to radically affect the larger factional alignments or overall political developments in Iran; nevertheless, they have often played a vocal and visible role in the contested political terrain of the Islamic republic, and they may do so again in the future. Because of this and other related reasons, certain aspects of these groups—important in better assessing possible post-Khomeyni developments—need to be briefly considered here.

The Hojatiyeh Society

The origins of this secretive and ultra-conservative religious organization remain obscure, but it appears to trace its beginning to the early 1930s and to a group of theology students who were inspired by the writings of Mirza Mehdi Isfahani. As Islamic purists, Hojatiyeh members advocated complete purification of Iranian Muslim society, starting with elimination of "heretical" Bahais and "godless" communists.[70] By the mid-1950s, a young theology student in Mashad named Sheykh Mahamud Tavalai, also know as Halabi, came to lead the organization. Concentrating on its efforts to reconvert the Bahais to Islam,

[70]The Hojatiyeh considers the universalist Bahai faith "a lethal heresy" since the original leader of the Bahais, Seyed Ali Mohammad Shirazi (an Iranian merchant from Shiraz), claimed in the 1840s to be a prophet of God, something contrary to the basic Islamic belief that Mohammad was the last prophet. On the emergence and later development of Bahai faith consult Shogh Balyuzi, 1974; Braden, 1963; Ferraby, 1975; Miller, 1974; Momen, 1981; and Shoghi, 1969.

this organization met with almost instant success and popularity in the late 1950s. Branches were soon established in Tehran, Mashad, Shiraz, and elsewhere where the movement's supporters instigated violent attacks against notable Bahai families. Some well-known clerics and religious individuals also lent their support to the Hojatiyeh; among them were the famous preacher Sheikh Mohammad Taghi Falsafi and Mohammad Taghi Shariat. Even Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi appears to have had the influence of the Hojatiyeh in mind when he issued a decree (*Fatwa*) calling for the closure of all institutions related to the Bahai faith.[71]

Realizing the extent of the society's support among the clergy and its nationwide popularity, the Shah is said to have relaxed his harsh treatment of politically motivated religious elements and to have granted the Hojatiyeh a limited degree of freedom.[72] The anti-Shah disturbances of June 1963 and the consequent clergy-state confrontation, however, ruined any working accommodation that had been reached between the regime and this organization. The monarch's heavy-handed suppression of all religious activists after 1963, meanwhile, resulted in a substantial reduction in the society's activities and influence. Working underground, the Hojatiyeh became radicalized in the early 1970s; while some of its youth organizations, such as the Mahdiyun and the Askariyun, together with other clerically led societies, continued the struggle against the Shah, the remaining membership devoted itself to tasks of Islamic propaganda and education of seminary students according to their ideals.[73]

Since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Hojatiyeh's political fortunes and influence have seen several ebbs and flows. Initially, the general anti-Bahai environment and the ensuing religious fervor of early post-revolutionary period helped the Hojatiyeh to place its members and sympathizers in several revolutionary organizations and government institutions, thus becoming one of the most powerful religious organizations in Iran.[74] For example, before the summer of 1981, the dominant faction in the Central Committee of the IRP, headed by Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, belonged to the Hojatiyeh

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[71]See Baghi, 1985, pp. 30–31, 230; also *Iran Press Digest*, September 28, 1982, pp. 19–21.

[72]Taheri, 1986, p. 189.

[73]In 1977 the Hojatiyeh claimed to have more than 12,000 regular members throughout Iran.

[74]At this time, the Hojatiyeh's influence was widely felt, especially in the Revolutionary Committees in major urban centers as well as in several government ministries, such as those for education, finances, labor, and foreign affairs.

Society.[75] Similarly, at about this time, of the 21 members in the Musavi's first cabinet, four were members or sympathizers of the society.[76]

While continuing its semi-clandestine political activities in various forms, the Hojatiyeh appeared to devote most of its attention to various educational, health, and social service enterprises in the years 1981 to 1984. In this period, nevertheless, the society was repeatedly targeted by the leftist-leaning clerical forces and their civilian partners.[77] As a consequence, many of its known leaders had to resign their governmental positions, while many others were purged altogether from key state institutions.[78] Since the mid-1980s, and at least until April 1986, when once again some clerics and extremist-controlled Iranian newspapers started a new campaign against the Hojatiyeh, this organization has kept a careful low profile in Iranian politics.[79]

In general, although the basically clandestine organizational set-up of the Hojatiyeh has remained largely in tact, its political influence and power seem to have declined. Several factors not only ensure the society's political survival, but enable many of its leaders and supporters to exercise noticeable influence within the clerical network. First, the Hojatiyeh's prominence is due in no small part to the religious and revolutionary credentials of its leadership, including Mohammad Beheshti, Mohammad Javad Bahonar, Ali Qodusi, Reza Mahdavi-Kani, Khazali, Makarem Shirazi, and Jalaleddin Farsi. The close personal and political ties that these men maintained with Khomeyni and other senior ayatollahs further contributed to the prominence of the Hojatiyeh.[80] Similarly, the charismatic personality of Sheykh Halabi, who

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[75]Rose, 1982, p. 49.

[76]Of these four cabinet ministers, Habibolah Asghar-Owladi continued to serve as Minister of Commerce until 1985. For details, see Hiro, 1985, p. 243.

[77]For coverage of specific anti-Hojatiyeh instigations by leftist forces, see for example, *Kayhan* (Tehran Daily in Persian), April 19 and May 31, 1983; *International Iran Times*, January 15, 1982, p. 1; *Sobh-e Azadegan*, February 24, and June 13, 1984.

[78]The crackdown against the Hojatiyeh received Khomeyni's blessing in August 1983 when he indirectly criticized the society's activities. For details, see *Iran News* (in Persian), No. 216, August 28, 1983, pp. 1-2; also *Kayhan* (Tehran), August 2, 1983, p. 2.

[79]Various news items pointing to revival of Hojatiyeh's political activities during the past few years have periodically appeared in the Persian language press. See for example, *Ettela'at*, February 9, 1985, pp. 21-25; *International Iran Times*, March 1, 1985; *Kayhan* (London), April 17, 1986, p. 1; August 14, 1986, p. 16; and March 19, 1987, p. 15.

[80]It is known that several grand ayatollahs, including Golpaygani and Mar'ashi, have on different occasions supported the Hojatiyeh, while Grand Ayatollah Khoi is commonly believed to be a firm Hojatiyeh patron. Much information on Hojatiyeh's ties with these and many other influential Shia clerics appears in various publications sponsored by the society. For example, see *Rah-e Roshangari* (Tehran), March 1983, pp. 1-46; *Hamgam ba Enghelab-e Eslami* (Tehran), pp. 12-16; also see Baghi, 1985, pp. 40, 51-52, 73-75, 195-196, 282-284.

still leads the Society from his home in southern Tehran, is equally significant in keeping the Hojatiyeh membership attached to the organization.[81]

Second, Hojatiyeh's long-established engagement in educational, religious, cultural, and social service activities have provided an ideal cover for political activity for its membership; at the same time, such activities have assisted them in recruiting loyal members and followers. Perhaps more important, such nonpolitical activities have, in time, made the Hojatiyeh an integral part of many poor Shia neighborhoods in Iran's urban centers and facilitated the society's efforts to forge uncommonly strong bonds with large sectors of deprived classes in the population.[82] Third, the Hojatiyeh's political, economic, and ideological objectives have secured several stable support sources for the society and have increased this organization's popularity among many. In particular, its staunch anti-communism and readiness to openly struggle against the Tudeh and all other leftist Iranian groups in the past decade have won over Bazaari merchants. The society's defense of private enterprise and free market economy, together with its strong opposition to nationalization of large industries and foreign trade, has prompted many industrialists, landlords, wealthy clerics, and entrepreneurs to support it financially and politically. The Hojatiyeh's long-established objection to the secular judicial system set up under the monarchy, and replacing it in accordance with Shia religious laws, has also increased its popularity among many other clerics who may or may not agree with specific ideological aims of the organization. Finally, the alleged internal solidarity of the rank-and-file Hojatiyeh membership, their systematic and rigid ideological socialization, and together with the internal organizational sophistication of the

[81]Although very little is known about the private life of Sheykh Halabi, several of our interviewees asserted that he is greatly respected and revered not only by his followers but by many senior and middle-level clerics. A "former member" of the society who was later elected to the first Majles describes Halabi in the following words: "His spiritual influence is felt throughout the Society. He is not merely a high-ranking official, but the members are devoted to him like a mystic and that accentuates the various dimensions of his personality." See *Sobh-e Azadegan* February 16, 1982, pp. 7,9.

[82]Article two of the society's revised internal constitution declares the propagation of Shia Islam to be the Hojatiyeh's major objective; this is to be achieved through the following avenues: (1) holding scientific and religious conferences and seminars in different parts of the country in accordance with the law; (2) publishing scientific and religious booklets and periodicals in accordance with the press law; (3) setting up classes for teaching Islamic culture and ethics; (4) opening libraries and sport centers; (5) engaging in public charity affairs and giving cultural aid to Islamic institutions (at home as well as abroad); (6) holding training sessions to train people for scientific, literary, and religious debates in Islamic circles; (7) establishing cultural institutions (schools, etc.); and (8) creating therapeutical centers (clinics, etc.)

The above information is quoted from several booklets named "Let Us Recognize the Anti-Revolutionary Nature of the Hojatiyeh Society," presumably published by the leftist Fadayan-e Khalgh (majority faction), probably in 1982.

society have all contributed much to Hojatiyeh's political and organizational survival.[83]

At present, the Hojatiyeh remains outwardly inactive in political affairs; nevertheless, it still has an unknown number of members and sympathizers in various governmental institutions, in the Majles, and in the Council of Guardians.[84] In addition, it is believed to have some measure of influence in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among some leading IRGC members. It may not take many years of hard work and political will to reinvigorate the Hojatiyeh, if and when the internal political atmosphere in Iran becomes conducive to a more open polity. Nevertheless, given its many limitations as a force standing at the very right end of the conservative political spectrum, the Hojatiyeh is not likely to play any major role in immediate post-Khomeyni developments.

Fadayan-e Eslam

In the same broad conservative alignment as the Hojatiyeh belongs an equally elusive secret organization known as *Jamiyat-e Fadayan-e Eslam* or The Association of the Devotees of Islam. This is a religious organization whose history is a blend of terror, political activism, and intensely fanatical religious devotion. Little is known about its organizational structure or internal dynamics. Similarly, the fluid nature of the Fadayan makes it extremely difficult to identify its current leadership or those clerics and government officials who sympathize with its goals and objectives. There are many indications, however, of a continued presence of some Fedayan members and sympathizers in the cabinet, the Majles, the IRGC, and many other state and religious institutions.

The Fadayan was founded in 1945 by a deeply religious student named Seyed Mojtaba Navab Safavi in Tehran. In the course of the next ten years, the organization quickly branched out to many Iranian cities, successfully advanced its ideal of Islamic political supremacy with unfailing devotion, and sacrificial commitment.[85] Aligning itself with the powerful Ayatollah Kashani during the anti-British oil nationalization movement of the early 1950s, the Fadayan witnessed a rapid

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[83]Some relevant information about Hojatiyeh's internal structure, organizational hierarchy, and recruitment policies, appears in Baghi, 1985, pp. 180–205.

[84]For example, Ayatollah Abol Qassem Khazali, believed to be a leader of Hojatiyeh, is a prominent member of the Council of Guardians.

[85]The origins, development, and activities of Fadayan-e Eslam under the Pahlavi regime are discussed in detail by Kazemi, 1984, pp. 158–167; also see Ferdows, 1967.

rise in its fortunes as a popular religious-political organization.[86] This phase of Fadayan life was concurrent with an increase in its guerrilla activities and its many assassination attempts against Iran's top political figures.[87] Following the 1953 coup that restored the Shah to power, many known Fadayan members were periodically rounded up and executed.[88] The organization was officially banned by the government in November 1955 following Fadayan's abortive assassination attempt on Prime Minister Hoseyn Ala. Thereafter, the organization operated clandestinely on a substantially reduced scale. In the mid-1960s several former followers of Navab Safavi were able to regroup into several militant religious organizations, and continued their struggle until the downfall of the monarchy. Nevertheless, because of the brutally effective security measures of the Pahlavi regime, there was little oppositional activity by the Fadayan-e Eslam (or by any other political group) in these years.

Since the onset of the Islamic revolution, the Fadayan-e Eslam has been officially resurrected under the leadership of Sheykh Sadegh Khalkhali, an influential cleric from Qom and a close personal associate of Khomeyni.[89] Thus the Islamic regime provided the Fadayan the long-awaited opportunity once again to organize and operate freely. At present the Fadayan maintain their headquarters in Tehran and in Qom and have offices in several Iranian urban centers. However, despite its freedom of action and propaganda, the Fadayan has not managed to become a mass organization under the Islamic Republic.[90] On the contrary, its original membership seems to have declined, and the organization has suffered a series of internal splits. Since late

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[86]There is evidence that in this period the British authorities viewed the Fadayan as a potential means of countering the rapid advance of the communist Tudeh party in Iranian politics. To the Soviets, however, the Fadayan was little more than a bunch of deranged fanatics devoted to a largely spent force, Islam. For discussion of Fadayan's alleged ties to the British and other foreign powers, see Razi, 1981; Richard, 1983, especially pp. 108-121.

[87]The victims of Fadayan-e Eslam's assassination attempts in this period included Ahmad Kasravi (March 1946), a prominent secularist historian and political thinker in Iran's modern history; Abdol Hoseyn Hazhir (November 1949), the Minister of Court and former prime minister; Ahamd Zangane (December 1949), Minister of Culture and Education; and General Ali Razmara (March 1951), the Prime Minister at that time.

[88]Navab and four of the top Fadayan leaders were executed in January 1956.

[89]Khomeyni himself is said to have maintained close ties with the Fadayan since its inception in the 1940s, providing a vital link between that organization and many influential clerics. Some information to this effect appears in *Navab va yaranash*, 1981, pp. 23–25. Also see Taheri, 1986, pp. 149–150.

[90]While Safavi is reported at various times to have claimed a membership of 100,000 sympathizers, other data suggest that, at its height, the Fadayan's followers and members never exceeded 30,000 to 40,000. For details see Kazemi, 1984, p. 168.

1985, the Fadayan has reportedly been divided into three rival factions. The first, led by Khalkhali and Abdollah Karbaschian, control the newspaper *Nabard-e Mellat*, and seem to be most influential in Qom, Yazd, and Isfahan. The second faction is headed by Hojatoleslam Mohammad Mehdi Abd Khodai and controls the newspaper *Manshur-e Baradari*, and seems to be more influential among the bazaari youth. The rest of the Fadayan membership are said to be the followers of Abolghasem Rafii who is reportedly a popular figure with many theology students.[91]

In terms of ideological beliefs, the Fadayan-e Eslam combine elements of Iranian nationalism with religious zeal in their propagation and defense of an Islamic Shia order. The organization and its various factions remain staunchly attached to the Islamic regime and advocate the strict enforcement of the *Sharia* or religious laws. Unlike the Hojatiyeh, however, the Fadayan have traditionally combined fundamentalism with violent xenophobia and place a high value on military training of their membership.

The Fadayan's social and economic views are spelled out in detail in their major ideological tract, *Rahnama-ye Haghayegh*.[92] They advocate traditional Islamic conservatism in resolution of many specific social and economic problems. The Fadayan stand for a egalitarian society in which wealth is distributed according to Islamic justice and principles of volunteerism. Private property is also considered valid and sacred under Islamic doctrine, while free enterprise and trade are believed to be inalienable rights of private individuals.[93]

The Fadayan-e Eslam has been minimally affected by Iranian political developments in the past few years. As a shadowy organization, it has continued to appeal to its traditional sympathizers, theological students, many of whom are zealously conservative in their interpretation of Islamic principles, together with the largely semi-literate, lower-class urban youth, particularly from the bazaar. In addition, the Fadayan seem to be influential in the Kayhan group of newspapers and within the editorial board of *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, the organ of the now-defunct IRP. In addition, some of Iran's clerical leaders, commonly considered to be loyal Fadayan members, continue to exercize considerable author-

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[91]This information was received from two of the interview subjects who seemed to be well-informed about internal developments among the Fadayan. Some of their assertions are corroborated by news reports in the Persian language publications. See, for example, *Payam-e Iran*, No. 244, October 20, 1985, p. 1.

[92]An unpublished English translation of this book is found in Ferdows, 1967.

[93]For the best discussion of various aspects of Fadayan's ideology, see Kazemi, 1985.

ity in Iranian politics.[94] Sadegh Khalkhali, for example, even though he was opposed by the IRP, retained his seat in the Majles from Qom in the April-May 1984 Majles elections; similarly, in the April 1988 parliamentary elections, Khalkhali managed to receive the largest number of votes cast for any candidate from Qom, and was returned to the Majles along with other Fadayan sympathizers.

As a religious and political organization, the Fadayan is not likely to increase its appeal and expand its sources of support for the foreseeable future beyond what it already has. At least, some of its political and religious objectives have already been realized under the Islamic republic, which has seriously weakened the role of ideology as a motivating force for new recruits. Fadayan's original political popularity has been to a large degree a direct result of their successful terrorist activities against leftists and secularists. But again, under the present Islamic regime, this function has been monopolized by far better organized groups and governmental agencies. These and many other factors are perhaps bound to further weaken the Fadayan as an independent organization, gradually transforming its various factions into little more than personal followings for some of its present leaders. The prospects for Fadayan in the post-Khomeyni period seem equally bleak. Unless Iran's internal stability and civic order deteriorates to the extremely unlikely point where Islamic state and revolutionary institutions crumble altogether in the face of hypothetical anti-regime pressures, the Fadayan may have little chance to re-invigorate their Islamic militarism or increase their political popularity.

Qom TTA

A third faction within the conservative spectrum is provided by a fairly large number of clerics with strong ties to most of Qom's theological schools. Called *Jame'eye Modarresin-e Qom* or Qom's Theological Teachers' Association (TTA), this group of conservative clergy has been highly critical of the government in general and of Prime Minister Musavi's economic policies in particular. Criticism has often been voiced in the form of sharp verbal attacks by the group's nominal head, Ayatollah Azari-Qomi, who is a prominent Majles member from Qom.[95] Azari-Qomi's criticisms are also printed in the group's newspaper *Resalat*, which is widely distributed throughout Iran.

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[94]These men include Hojatoleslams Azimi, Hadi Khosrowshahi, Lavasani, and many others.

[95]Other prominent clerical leaders of the TTA include Ayatollahs Khazali, Shari, and Rasti-Kashari. See *Iran Press Digest*, July 22, 1985.

Despite their highly vocal denunciations of the Musavi cabinet, the Qom TTA does not by itself constitute an important block of opposition to the government. If the TTA had the necessary means and resources at its disposal, it would have quickly used them to undermine Musavi's premiership or to block his policies instead of openly criticizing him. Had the TTA been in control of important institutions or enjoyed the active support of influential personalities, it could have achieved its objectives more effectively than by risking the wrath of Khomeyni by openly attacking the government.[96]

Almost none of the regime's notable figures with a large personal following are members of the group or have unreservedly supported it. Similarly, those linked with the TTA are not well-known personalities, and many of them lack solid revolutionary credentials.[97] In contrast, many political actors in Iran trace their pro-Khomeyni activism to the 1960s and later in the 1970s. The TTA's strict application of the Sharia does not find much appeal among broad segments of the society and has resulted in its ideological isolation. Consequently, the TTA's primary base of support has been confined largely to the theology students of Qom, Tehran, and Mashad.

Although there has been a rapid increase in the numerical size of *tollab* and religious seminaries in recent years, there is little indication to suggest that they have become a political force in their own right. In addition, the TTA strongly supports the private sector and favors a reduction of the government's role in the economy;[98] however, unlike the Hojatiyeh, it has yet to forge a strong alliance with Bazaari merchants or other economically conservative powerful elements. The absence of a Bazaar-TTA alliance appears to arise from the Bazaaris' estimation that such ties may prove to be more troublesome than beneficial to themselves in the long run. The Bazaar merchants have occasionally been subject to extensive pressure by the Musavi government and other extremist forces and seem to fear that any overture with a controversial and weak clerical group such as the TTA may further antagonize their opponents in and out of the government.

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[96]This was indeed what happened when in late 1986 some eight Majles members affiliated with the TTA raised a question regarding the role of some government officials in the then secret U.S.-Iranian arms deals. These men were immediately condemned by Khomeyni and subsequently arrested. For details of this episode, see *Kayhan* (London), December 4, 1986, p. 15; and December 25, 1986, p.15.

[97]The TTA repeatedly purged some of its members, including Behzad Nabari, Minister of Heavy Industries, because of their radical economic views and their advocacy of greater government control over the economy. See for details *Iran Press Digest*, July 1, 1986.

[98]For a discussion of TTA's economic view, see *Iran Press Digest*, July 30, 1985.

Bazaaris

The bazaar is not simply the marketplace in Iran. Instead, it is an important commercial, social, and cultural entity nearly complete in itself. It is an organic part of every Iranian urban center of any size and has its own internal organization, values, and leadership.[99] At the same time, the bazaar (especially that of Tehran) is the source of most of Iran's wholesale, distribution, and import-export trade. Under the Islamic republic, in addition to engaging in complex international transactions and internal contractual dealings, the Bazaaris have provided a large portion of the country's financial capital and the manpower that forms the core of the modern industrial sector of the Iranian economy.

Although the bazaar has no organized political groups within it, it acts as an exceptionally powerful economic interest group by virtue of its internal organization and by its traditional ties with the Shia clergy. The most significant avenue for group activities within the bazaar is the *hey'at*; informal periodic meetings where the Bazaaris gather to discuss, among other issues, the economic and political situation of the bazaar or the government's latest policies; They serve to pass on information, ideas, and rumors not only among the Bazaaris but also to the clerics and the rest of the urban population. *Hey'at* participants are not confined to a specific class or group of people. Instead, *tojar* (wealthy businessmen), *kasabeh* (small businessmen, shopkeepers, and peddlers), *olama* (clerics), *kargaran* (workers), *hammalan* (porters), and low-level government bureaucrats are all represented in a typical *hey'at* meeting. Although the norms, values, and concerns of the Bazaaris flow up to the clerical elite, those of the clerics percolate down to the bazaar and through it to the rest of the urban community. As informal avenues of interpersonal communication, the *hey'ats* are also closely connected with a host of guilds, fraternities, and trade associations representing people of the same economic interests or provincial origin in Tehran and other major cities.[100] This aspect of the internal organization enables the Bazaaris to be quickly informed of economic and political developments anywhere in Iran and mobilize their member-

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[99]On the role and place of the bazaar in modern Iranian society, see Thaiss, 1971; and English, 1966.

Many of these organizations are at present brought under the organizational supervision of several powerful semi-independent organs that promote and defend the collective economic rights and privileges of the Bazaaris. These organs, invariably dominated by the Bazaari elements, include *Etehadiyeh Markazi Bazaarian* (Central Union of the Bazaaris), *Komiteh Omur Senfi* (Committee for the Guilds), and *Ettehadiyeh Senfi* (Union of the Guilds).

ship in a collective manner in the face of anticipated threats by hostile forces.[101]

The relationship of the bazaar to the Shia clerics is well-known in the history of Iran. Less well-known, perhaps, is that the bazaar and its immediate neighborhoods provide most of the financial and moral support for the clerics. In turn, the Shia clerics have traditionally utilized the bazaar and the extensive network of mosques within it as their primary center of operation. Whereas the commercial interest provides the raison d'être for the bazaar's existence, religion is the cement that binds the Bazaari structure together. In the political realm, however, the Bazaaris' ties to the clerical government has faced a dilemma since the Iranian revolution.[102] In general, the bazaar has supported the regime in its efforts to concentrate political power in its own hands as a means of providing for internal political stability in Iran. Thus the Bazaaris have welcomed the stability that only a strong government could bring to the country. At the same time, however, the bazaar resents further governmental control over its economic activities and has more than once challenged the government's arbitrary economic powers. Similarly, while the clerics resent the independence and economic liberalism of the Bazaari elements, they also need them for financial support and domestic economic prosperity. This mutual interdependence has thus far prevented clerics, especially the extremist ones, from siding with secular industrialists as the Shah attempted to do in the early 1970s.

Economic policies pursued by the clerical government continue to be one of the main divisive issues contributing to factionalism in Iran. By its nature the bazaar is at the center of this controversy; the Bazaaris have been the subject of as much political support and praise as they have been of criticism and condemnation. The conservative camp in general, and Ayatollah Montazeri in particular, are the main proponents of the economic interests of the Bazaaris, repeatedly calling for the lifting of government restrictions on private economic activities. The *Hojatiyeh* and the *Fadayan-e Eslam* are also known to favor a reduction of government control in economic affairs. Many of the leaders of these two groups also maintain close personal ties with Bazaari elements. Furthermore, although none of the members of the

[101]Several interviewees were convinced that the bazaar has always been in a position to recognize society's ills and other potential economic problems much before the government or the intellectuals. "It is the pulse of Iranian society and economy," said a Bazaari. "If the bazaar is quiet, that means the nation is satisfied and prosperous, and if there is agitation or dissatisfaction in the bazaar, it means the country is facing grave socioeconomic problems."

[102]For a discussion of the political role of the bazaar in the Iranian revolution of 1979 and its aftermath, see Atighpur, 1980.

Council of Guardians have voiced emphatic support for the Bazaaris or explicitly called for more freedom of action for the bazaar, the Council has repeatedly rejected government measures for confiscation of lands owned by proprietors, including many Bazaaris. The opponents of the Bazaaris are equally prominent and vociferous in condemning them. These include many of the leading clerics within the extremist camp, but also some pragmatists, including Rafsanjani, whose criticism of the Bazaaris has generally been less harsh than that of Musavi and seemingly inspired more by practical considerations than by doctrinal commitments. Musavi, however, has opposed the Bazaaris with an ideological zeal uncommon in the economic debates within the regime.

At present, the role and status of the bazaar is precarious. On one hand, it remains a powerful economic group that tries to influence the political process by appeasing or pressuring governmental organs. On the other hand, it is subject to a great deal of pressure by a government that tries to manage an economy it cannot control. However, in an all-out reconstruction effort, Iran's needs for Western trade, technology, and even investment are likely to open up further economic opportunities for this group and strengthen its position and political role in Iranian society.

The ACC

A typical clerical faction, this time within the pragmatist camp, is provided by a large group who have coalesced under the name of *Jame'eyeh Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez* or the Association of the Combatant Clerics (ACC). Established in 1976 as an underground Islamic revolutionary movement, the ACC gradually came to surface in 1977–1978 when it engaged primarily in mobilizing popular support for Khomeyni's anti-Shah movement. After the revolution, the ACC had acquired a formal structure and known membership, quickly penetrated the mosque system, especially in Tehran, and by 1983 had turned many of these into its own bastions of power. Since then the ACC has become an active political arm and transformed traditional religious infrastructures into reliable supporting foundations for the Islamic regime. As an organized clerical group, the ACC has openly participated in the country's political life; at the same time, it has kept its organizational independence by resisting various

attempts to merge it with other Islamic groupings such as the now-defunct IRP.[103]

Compared with a large number of other clerical groups, the ACC has projected a moderate image in the past few years. This moderation has been apparent in its stands on several political, social, and economic issues. For example, it has officially opposed various radical land reform measures and attempts to nationalize Iran's foreign trade. It has also criticized the harsh treatment of various anti-regime opposition elements and repeatedly called for creation of a more open internal political atmosphere conducive to the return of skilled Iranian workers, technicians, professionals, and industrial managers, thousands of whom left Iran after the revolution.[104]

During the past years the ACC's socioeconomic and political views have been effectively expressed by its long-time leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Reza Mahdavi-Kani. This former Khomeyni student is one of Iran's few top clerics who has consistently advocated moderate internal and external policy goals but has been pragmatic enough to cooperate with both the conservative and extremist elements in many specific cases. In addition, Mahdavi-Kani has often played a balancing and moderating role in various factional discords among the rest of clerics, although he seems to be as politically ambitious as any other cleric.[105] At present, in addition to being the secretary general of the ACC, Mahavi-Kani is a leading member of the Council of Guardians and the president of Emam Sadegh University, which is believed to be Iran's most modern Islamic center of higher education.[106]

As for the support bases of the ACC, this organization seems to be stronger among middle and upper-middle class preachers, teachers, and other clerics, especially in Tehran, Mashad, and Shiraz. It also enjoys

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[103]For example, without actually joining the IRP, the ACC entered a tactical coalition with it during the April 1980 parliamentary elections and was able to elect 35 of its candidates to the Majles.

[104]The number of these people currently living outside Iran runs well over one million. Although the Islamic regime has several times attempted to entice such people, especially the professionals, to return to Iran, official campaigns have thus far been unsuccessful.

[105]Several interviewees who more or less identified themselves with the general views of either the conservative or extremist camps were unanimous in asserting that Ayatollah Kani was acceptable as a leading member of the Leadership Council in case Ayatollah Montazeri could not be elected to succeed Khomeyni as the faghih.

[106]Ayatollah Kani, aged 66 now, was born into a wealthy religious family in Tehran, has a degree in divinity, and was repeatedly imprisoned during the Shah's rule, the last time being from 1975 to mid-1978. He was an original member of the Revolutionary Council from early 1979 to its dissolution in summer of 1980, and he headed the Central Revolutionary Committee in Tehran from February 1979 to March 1980, when he became a cabinet member in the Rajai government as Minister of Interior. In addition, Kani served as prime minister from September 1981 to October 1982.

some noticeable support among religious university students and middle-level civil bureaucracy. The ACC has also been influential among the revolutionary committees and some Bazaari elements. As of this writing, the ACC's present political influence and its future status cannot be determined. The basic reason for this assertion is that for the first time in its history, the ACC split into two rival wings on the eve of the latest parliamentary elections in Iran in April 1988. Indeed, the split came into the open in the middle of March 1988 when a group of pragmatist clerics headed by Ayatollah Mehdi Karubi declared their separation from the ACC and established an organization named *Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez*, or the Combatant Clerics).[107] Judging by the names of several known individuals whom these two rival organizations introduced as their parliamentary candidates in the April-May Majles elections, the split occurred on the bases of both personal and ideological disagreements. There is reason to believe that the split has pushed the Mahdavi-Kani faction toward more conservative positions, opening the way for a possible future alliance with the *Resalat* group.[108] In the meantime, the Karubi group has apparently inched closer to extremist clerics such as Ayatollah Khoeyniha.[109]

The Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution

Until recently the *Mojahedin-e Enghelab Eslami* (the Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution or MIR) occupied a prominent position among Iran's extremist organizations. This paramilitary group, not to be confused with the Mojahedin-e Khalgh, came into being in March 1979 when seven small Islamic guerrilla groups amalgamated into a single

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[107]Within a few days after the split, Khomeyni openly consented to the division by stating "differences of opinion are natural [and] should not be confused with enmity and factional discord." For details see *Kayhan* (London), April 21, 1988, p. 1 and *Kayhan Havai* (Tehran), March 30, 1988, p. 3.

[108]For example, the electoral name-list introduced by this faction during the April 1988 parliamentary elections included several well-known conservatives such as Seyed Reza Zavarei, Asadollah Badamchian, and Dari Najafabadi. These people were at the same time supported by many conservatives, including the *Resalat* group. In addition to backing such pragmatists as Rajai Khorasani, Iran's former UN delegate, and Mohammad Yazdi, the former deputy speaker of the Majles, the ACC also threw its support behind several others who are known to be affiliated with the *Hojatiyeh*, *Fadayan-e Eslam* or are Bazaaris themselves. These included Habibollah Asgarowladi, the former minister of commerce, Mohsen Nurbakhsh, the former director of the Central Bank, and Mohammad Nabi Habibi, Tehran's former mayor.

[109]Ayatollah Khoeyniha is reported to have actively supported Karubi during the internal disagreements within the ACC and sided with him against Kani since the split. For details see *Kayhan* (London), April 21, 1988, p. 3; also *International Iran Times*, April 15, 1988, p. 13.

unit.[110] Viewing itself as the hard core of the Islamic revolution, the MIR function was initially confined to providing armed militia support to revolutionary authorities.[111] The organization was given to attacking the new regime's political opponents and played a crucial role in the takeover of the U.S. Embassy on November 4, 1979. Later on, when the IRGC came to be organized, many of the MIR's followers and members joined the IRGC while keeping their ties with their original organization, by then transformed into a political party.[112]

Unlike many other factional groups in Iran, the MIR has been led predominantly by revolutionary laymen, although many middle and lower level clerics are known to have been among its leading members and sympathizers. This shortcoming, however, was partly compensated for by its tight internal structure and discipline, partly because its technocrats have occupied influential positions in several state structures, and partly because its leader, Behzad Nabavi, has often acted as one of the Islamic regime's major troubleshooters.[113] An analysis of the public views of several core members of this organization leaves little doubt about the MIR's devotion to radical economic and social ideals and its extreme rigidity in domestic and foreign policy issues. For example, in the past several years, it has often called for the adoption of radical land reform measures and nationalization of insurance, banking, foreign trade, mining, and manufacturing and industrial production; it has also demanded the complete purge of all anti-revolutionary elements including "pro-American mercenaries" in the civilian bureaucracy and the armed forces. In rather sharp contrast with other similar groups, however, the MIR has been unconcerned in general with Islamic legal, theological, and cultural issues.

In terms of factional alignments, the MIR remained firmly allied with the IRP in general and the Musavi group in particular. As a

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[110]These were the like-minded underground Islamic revolutionary organizations of *Fallah, Mansurun, Saff, Movaheddin, Khalgh, Badr*, and *Omat-e Vahedeh*; during the revolutionary upheaval of 1978–1979, these groups were active in attacking police stations, prisons, government buildings, and army barracks. Immediately after the revolution, the membership of these and many other similar groups, acting as agents for revolutionary authorities, were given to arresting counterrevolutionaries, confiscating property, and often setting personal scores against one another or against "suspects" of all types. For details see Bakhash, 1984, especially pp. 119–120; also *Kayhan Havai* (Tehran), October 15, 1986, p. 4; *Kayhan* (London), No. 120, October 23, 1986, pp. 1, 14.

[111]Many of the original founders and members of this organization had received military training in the PLO camps in south Lebanon from the mid to late 1970s. Hiro, 1985, pp. 109–110.

[112]For a discussion of the origins and development of the Islamic Revolutionary Corps Guards see Schahgaldian, 1987, pp. 64–73.

[113]For Nabavi's profile see *Financial Times* (London), April 1, 1985, Section IV, p. 4; also *Ettela'at*, October 24, 1985, pp. 3–4.

consequence, this organization was given a share of power in late 1981 when Hoseyn Musavi became prime minister.[114] However, the participation of this group in successive Musavi cabinets proved to be a mixed blessing. On one hand, cabinet portfolios increased MIR's public visibility, expanded its influence in several key revolutionary and governmental structures in the period 1981–1986, and facilitated its recruitment of lower-class urban youths and students who had always formed the primary support bases of this organization; on the other hand, it exacerbated internal personal and ideological differences within the MIR leadership.

As members of government, some of this organization's leaders were obligated to publicly defend its policies. At the same time, to keep their already radicalized followers, many MIR leaders had to continue criticizing the government's alleged lack of a more radical thrust. In time this dilemma not only vexed personal and ideological divisions in successive cabinets, it also helped to divide the MIR into two opposing factions. Unable to resolve this and many other related issues, the MIR split into several rival sub-groups in mid-1983.[115]

The final break, however, did not come until the fall of 1986. This appears to have been brought about by the considerable domestic pressure generated by the disclosure of secret Iranian contacts with the United States. Internal disagreements among the MIR leaders reached a high point when some of them sided with Prime Minister Musavi and later, during the Mehdi Hashemi affair, opposed such contacts with the "Great Satan." A rival MIR faction, however, threw its weight behind Rafsanjani, reportedly the real force behind the initiative, calling for the punishment of the Hashemi group and concentration of foreign policy decisionmaking power in the foreign ministry. Internal rivalries between the two opposing camps soon led to bitter conflicts among the MIR leadership and resulted in public denunciations, followed by partisan clashes, imprisonments, and the like in July-September 1986.[116] Eventually, to prevent further clashes among this organization's leaders and stop it from spilling into the ranks of their ordinary membership and followers, Ayatollah Khomeyni issued a decree on October 6, 1986 dissolving the organization.[117] Since then, many of the

[114]Musavi appointed MIR leader Behzad Nabavi as Minister of Executive Affairs and government spokesman, Mohammad Salamatian as Minister of Agriculture, and Shahab Gonabadi as Minister of Housing and Urban Development. A few months later, Nabavi became the Minister of Heavy Industries and has continued in that position.

[115]Hiro, 1985, p. 242.

[116]For details see, for example, *Kayhan* (London), October 23, 1986, p. 14, and November 20, 1986, p. 6; also FBIS-SAS, *Daily Report*, No. 106, June 3, 1986, I2.

[117]The text of Khomeyni's decree appears in *Kayhan Havai* (Tehran), October 15, 1986, p. 4; also see the same newspaper, No. 697, October 22, 1986, p. 3.

MIR's top leaders, including Behzad Nabavi, Mohammad Salamatian, and Morteza Alveyri, have joined forces with various extremist groups, especially those identified with Mir Hoseyn Musavi; many others have entered the conservative ranks, including the Qom TTA.[118]

ROLE OF THE ISSUES

The common devotion of Iran's ruling clerics to the Islamic regime's ideals and their considerable internal solidarity have not prevented the emergence of factional differences on a host of policy questions. Disagreements among the three large factional coalitions as well as among specific political groups within these have been sharpest on economic issues. Concerns about land expropriation, nationalization of large-scale industries, regulation of foreign trade, and distribution of wealth have been the very issues that have bedeviled Iran's rulers since the earliest days of the revolution and continue to generate intense partisan debate.

This debate has often been interpreted—erroneously—in the West as a left-right division within the clerical network. Some media organs often portray those who favor government intervention in the economic affairs as "the radicals" or leftists in favor of socialist policies, and those who oppose such policies as "moderates."[119] Factional differences on economic matters are not an issue of capitalism versus socialism. On the contrary, the Shia clerics are largely unified in the belief that Islam honors private property and it is the government's duty to protect it. Some of the clerics believe, however, that they are obligated by religious law to ensure that interests of any individual or social group do not harm the overall interests of the *ommat* or the community of believers. In effect, they argue that the accumulation of excessive private wealth and property as practiced under capitalism can be detrimental to internal political stability and to the social welfare of the population. Thus, they call for prevention of this outcome through government regulation.

A discussion of the moderating effect of Shia religious doctrine on other specific socioeconomic and political issues of discord among Iran's ruling clerical network is beyond the scope of this study. However, the role of issue-oriented disagreements in current Iranian politics should not be exaggerated. The close analysis of various factional

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[118]See *Kayhan Havai*, October 15, 1986, p. 4; *International Iran Times*, No. 781, November 7, 1986, pp. 1, 11.

[119]For an example of this sort of reporting, see *The Economist*, June 13, 1987, pp. 44–45.

developments among Iranian clerics indicates that nonpersonal issues and ideological cleavages, in contrast with personal and personality differences, have played a secondary and much weaker role in factional alignments. As a consequence, divisions of this nature are poor indicators for understanding the internal dynamics of clerical politics in Iran. This is not meant to imply that socioeconomic or ideological issues of discord among the clerics are to be discounted altogether. On the contrary, many such issues often coincide with personal disagreements among rival clerics who justify their partisan activities in the name of profound ideological commitments. When they do, ideological disagreements quickly acquire a force of their own and spill into the rank and file. The overt intervention of higher authorities in such cases often proves to be the only available means for resolving these conflicts.

PRESENT STATUS AND FUTURE ROLE OF FACTIONS

The difficulties in outlining the present position and probable future direction of intra-elite factionalism in Iran arise out of the extreme fluidity of present alignments, the overlapping interests of contending factions, and the continued evolution of specific conflicts on an almost daily basis. The highly unpredictable behavior of the Iranian government domestically and in the international arena also make the examination of long-range future developments an extremely hazardous task.

As of this writing it is evident that all three political coalitions are under considerable domestic pressure, initially caused by the disclosure of secret Iranian contacts with the United States. Pressure has increased dramatically since then, especially because of Iran's unexpected decision on July 18, 1988 to accept the ceasefire with Iraq. The story about the secret contacts was disclosed in connection with the arrest of many middle and lower-level Iranian officials, including a relative of Ayatollah Montazeri (Mehdi Hashemi), who were opposed to such contacts with the "Great Satan." Many of those arrested belonged to the extremist camp. For some time thereafter, Montazeri appeared to be in serious trouble, especially as his calls for a radical approach to foreign policy made him a ready suspect for supporting Hashemi. Montazeri, however, disassociated himself from Hashemi and called for his full punishment. Later on, Montazeri resumed his frequent advice-giving and appeared to have weathered the incident. But in late March of 1989, Khomeyni removed him from his position as the future faghih. Rafsanjani, Khamenei, and several other clerics, however, perhaps the real forces behind the American initiative, seem to have emerged as winners and pursue their intents publicly. In a

rare display of leniency toward the United States, Rafsanjani confidently stated:

> We are not happy to have caused trouble for Reagan and the White House. We did not initially intend to. . . . We will mediate with the Lebanese people for the release of hostages.[120]

Rafsanjani continued making such conciliatory statements throughout the early summer of 1987. By the end of June, however, by which time the U.S. government had decided to provide military escort to Kuwaiti ships in the Persian Gulf, Rafsanjani became increasingly critical of the United States. Referring to President Reagan, Rafsanjani is reported to have said: "A bull that has horns but no brains."[121] He also claimed, "We would point part of our artillery at the Yankees and take Americans captive with their hands on their heads to camp with humiliation."[122]

Although such statements could be interpreted as angry clerical reactions to a radically more visible American military presence in the Persian Gulf, they also indicate the ease with which factional political leaders in Iran can change their positions. Rafsanjani's views about the United States were not likely to change within the space of a month, but the stability of his domestic position and political strength was. Having encountered opposition to his unorthodox foreign policy line, Rafsanjani and his pragmatist allies had reversed their positions and were once again advocating a supposedly true "revolutionary" line. Since then, the pragmatist leaders have gradually returned to their original positions.

The widespread resentment toward Musavi's social and economic policies is unabated. This resentment has now spread from the Bazaaris and industrialists to many sectors of the public at large. Aware that the government's socioeconomic policies have resulted in extensive public discontent, most high ranking members of the regime, including Musavi himself, can no longer deliver apologetic speeches justifying economic shortcomings on grounds of the war and the need for public sacrifice. Moreover, having already served twice as the Prime Minister, Musavi also seems to be nearing the end of his political career unless reappointed to another post by Khomeyni. The declining powers of several conservative political groups such as the *Fadayan-e Eslam* and their leaders has already been alluded to.

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[120]See Rafsanjani's interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), quoted in FBIS-SA, *Daily Report*, April 21, 1987.

[121]See FBIS-NESA. *Daily Report*, June 29, 1987.

[122]See *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1987, p. 14.

At present, each faction is maneuvering itself into new positions in an effort to expand its sources of support, keeping in mind Khomeyni's old age and anticipating factional conflicts subsequent to his death. Many factions are currently modifying their domestic and international orientations to further solidify their positions. However, a determining factor in the near-term fortunes of many clerical factions and leading personalities is Ayatollah Khomeyni himself. The faghih has always made a practice of placing contending individuals and factions in close proximity to himself and in a working relationship to one another. In fact, it is difficult to see individuals who have often shared power in compatible state posts but who are not at odds with one another. Rafsanjani, Musavi, Montazeri, Khamenei, Khoeyniha, Ardabili, Meshkini, Kani, Nabavi, Khalkhali, and scores of others are examples of Khomeyni's use of rival personalities to balance each other's power.

Khomeyni seems to be trying to reduce the powers of all the opposing factions simultaneously, thus putting pressure on their leaders and forcing them into line with his own wishes and directives. He seems to have realized that the factional infighting in the past few months was becoming too dangerous and that it could potentially erupt into open conflict once he departed from the scene. Thus, by attempting to play various individuals against one another within the same specific faction or between different rival groups, albeit in a controlled manner, he may be trying to make it more difficult for one faction and their leader to overpower the others if an overt conflict ever ensues. Thus, the political fate of many top Iranian leaders in the immediate future may be directly dependent on Khomeyni's intentions.

In the longer run, however, especially after the Ayatollah's death, the weight, status, and fortunes of contending factions will be greatly affected by several developments and events that have already changed the political and security environment in Iran and the region. In the first place, Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire with Iraq on July 18, 1988 seems to have unleashed a host of factors that are likely to have a lasting effect on that country's domestic and foreign policies. Indeed, the acceptance of the cease-fire was a landmark in the short history of the Islamic Republic, and it has already opened up a new chapter for Iran's clerical rulers: Ever since the establishment of the new regime, its clerical leaders have been reacting to real and imagined internal and foreign enemies; now, they face up to problems and challenges of postwar reconstruction. Among many other recent developments, this change alone is affecting the support bases of factional alignments within the clerical network. For example, the Musavi government and its extremist allies can no longer exploit the war with Iraq for their own advantage in domestic politics and thus justify their efforts for greater centralization of political power and introduction

of austere economic policies. Consequently, the current government in Tehran finds itself unable to manage the economy. Meanwhile there are many indications that since the cessation of military hostilities with Iraq the reaction of large sectors of Iran's population to the government has rapidly come to depend directly on its capability to fulfill its long-promised goals of social and economic reforms. However, realization of such goals poses many difficulties. For one, where anti-government political dissent and opposition could be controlled by brute force, such tools are largely useless in economic management matters. Instead, reforms of this nature usually call for rationality, specialization, compromise, and pragmatism. But these are not the sorts of values to which the extremists' camp is particularly attached. This and many similar problems have already led to a series of divisive debates and disagreement within the extremist camp;[123] these factors can be expected to negatively affect the political status and weight of many extremist factions.

It is too early to forecast with confidence how far Iran's current leaders are ready to go in distancing themselves from the aggressive policies that characterized their domestic and international behavior in the last few years; however, the new political and military circumstances seem to be especially favorable to the clerical politicians belonging to the pragmatist camp. Aside from advocating new foreign policy directions, the pragmatists have become more outspoken, visible, and assertive in domestic matters. Under pressure applied by this camp, the regime has recently been forced to relax or abandon many of its severe social and cultural measures. For example, it now permits the playing of chess and musical instruments, and radio broadcasts of female singers.[124] Also attempts have been made to encourage some Iranian exiles who have opposed the regime to return home. More important, there is an effort to trim the wings of hard-line IRGC commanders in favor of the professional military, where a wave of promotions for high-ranking officers has been underway. These policies have been implemented by Parliament Speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani whose political fortunes seem to be ascending.[125] Finally, the pragmatists

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[123]An indication of the heightened unease among the extremists involved the sudden resignation of Prime Minister Musavi on September 5, 1988 when he cited strong opposition to his cabinet members and disagreements about postwar reconstruction policies as main reasons for his move. The next day Khomeyni ordered him to remain in office. For details, see *International Iran Times*, No. 26, September 9, 1988, pp. 1, 14.

[124]See *New York Times*, September 25, 1988, pp. 1, 8.

[125]This already powerful politician succeeded in becoming the Acting Commander-in-Chief of Iran's armed forces, both the IRGC and the regular military, on June 2, 1988 while he kept the rest of his many official state positions.

received a boost from the U.S. Senate when in September 1988 it called for imposing economic sanctions on Iraq for repeatedly using chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers and its own citizens in the course of the Iran-Iraq war.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Although the focus of the present study has been Iran's ruling clerical establishment, it is important to place this network in the context of the larger Iranian political picture, because one of the original motives for undertaking this research was to assess the durability of the current Islamic regime in Tehran and probe its future destiny once Ayatollah Khomeyni disappears from the political scene. The foregoing analysis suggests that serious internal political instability in Iran before the death of Khomeyni is improbable; neither is Iran likely to sink suddenly into chaos and political anarchy in the immediate post-Khomeyni period. Instead, Iran may gradually become a country with a high propensity for internal instability, despite the likelihood of a peaceful settlement of the current leadership succession struggle.

THE DURABILITY OF THE CLERICAL REGIME

Despite heavy human losses and allocation of huge financial amounts to its war effort, Iranian decisionmakers finally concluded that they could not achieve a meaningful military victory against Iraq. The clerics in Tehran appear to be committed to a political resolution of the conflict with Iraq, but the prospect for peace has thrust a host of postwar problems and challenges that are now awaiting urgent policy decisions. Although the regime continues to keep the economy ticking, it is clearly unable to bring about the long-awaited socioeconomic improvements it has repeatedly promised. For example, industrial and agricultural production remains slumped, finances have deteriorated further, and shortages remain chronic. The problems unleashed by an effective inflation rate of 50 percent and by the presence of many millions of unemployed people and war-stricken internal refugees remain unsolved. Moreover, despite the cease-fire, the country remains on a war-footing, and neither the state nor the private sector is apparently in a position now, or in the near future, to provide lasting improvements unless internal volatility is somewhat reduced.

Because of these and many other problems, the urban poor and the bazaar merchants—the original backbones of the revolution—have cooled considerably toward the clerical factions. There is a growing general dissatisfaction, and oppositional feelings have become prevalent. At present, these feelings are vague and lack political focus. Nonclerical opposition groups are either crushed or remain weak

organizationally; they are therefore unable to exploit public grievances, much less to challenge the regime. However, any major political discord among the clerics or further economic dislocation may quickly transform these grievances into organized political opposition.

In part because of these developments the domestic political situation has become more fluid and unsettled. Major clerical factions are maneuvering to increase their strength and position themselves for a possible factional showdown. At the same time, many top clerics have seriously warned various revolutionary organizations and clerical factions not to get involved in overtly partisan politics and activities. This effort to distance otherwise loyal forces from the political arena indicates that the ruling clerical establishment, faced with growing rifts among its top ranks, cannot fully trust its own social foundations, and it may be fearful that the division among its leaders may become a division among supporters.

These developments have begun to seriously erode the clerics' popular support bases. However, they are unlikely to push the Islamic Republic to the brink of collapse. Indeed, many factors will prevent such an outcome in the foreseeable future. These include:

- Ayatollah Khomeyni continues to have a firm grip on the government, the clerical establishment, and the revolutionary organs. He is likely to continue steering a middle course among rival clerical leaders, to control and balance them, and to remain on the top of the Iranian political pyramid, thus ensuring the regime's existence. As long as he is alive, the contending clerical factions are expected to continue to compete with each other for interpreting his wishes rather than promoting policies that specifically contradict him.
- As long as Khomeyni is in effective power, the Islamic regime is likely to continue to subdue, demoralize, and crush resistance from anti-clerical elements. The regime can also easily digest and neutralize oppositional political activity, including attempted coups. Splits within the clerical leadership and factional rivalries among them are also not likely to get out of hand so as to give the outsiders—clerical, secular, or leftist—an opportunity to compete for power.
- Although the clerical establishment is far from being a unified or monolithic political entity, most of its members share enough social and political views to give this network considerable internal strength and cohesion. This solidarity is reinforced by the common experiences of key clerical leaders both before and after the establishment of the Republic. In their attempt to

consolidate their political position, the clerics have utilized many religiously sanctioned and culturally accepted elements of traditional Iranian political behavior. They have also refined many public management tactics and have woven these into an elaborate mechanism for political survival. These tactics and behavior patterns have given the clerics extraordinary political versatility, more then otherwise expected.

SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS FOR THE POST-KHOMEYNI ERA

A striking feature of revolutionary Iran is the rapidity and success with which the clerical establishment has consolidated its power and, through carefully staged moves, has attempted to institutionalize its rule. Even so, the real test for the survival of the Islamic Republic will come when Khomeyni dies or is incapacitated. The provisions for succession in the current Islamic Constitution are vague and remain untested. Chances of surprising events will increase at Khomeyni's death. When power becomes available, its coveters multiply. The least that can be asserted is that possibilities for unknown events in the immediate post-Khomeyni period will at least equal those that can now be envisioned.

The key members of the clerical network possess tremendous freedom for political action and are rarely swayed by ideological considerations. At the same time, they have a strong tradition of at least minimal cooperation in crucial political matters, lest all be endangered. Thus, upon Khomeyni's death they may not let the succession issue become unmanageable or their rivalries spill into lower clerical ranks and subordinate organizations. After all, to the Islamic authorities this is not a new problem that will catch them unprepared: Ever since coming to power, the leadership has always been perplexed by the issue of who would rule after Khomeyni.

Despite constitutional vagaries, there is a distinct likelihood that rival factional leaders would utilize the Council of Experts as an ideal mechanism and carry out their succession struggles behind its closed doors. In the process, they will be under strong pressure to do everything for preserving a cover of secrecy and unanimity. The most dangerous time may not be immediately after Khomeyni's death, because uncertainty and common fears may force key clerical leaders to work together. Personal, ideological, and other disagreements, however, will gradually come to the political foreground a few months later when temporary alliances and behind the scene political deals are likely

to lose their former utility; these may lead to a very fluid and unsettled domestic political situation. The fact that none of the current contenders for power has yet succeeded in acquiring a prestige and legitimacy even remotely approaching that of Khomeyni will necessarily weaken popular support for any successor and may further fragment centralized authority in this period.

In the short run, the Iranian political scene in the immediate post-Khomeyni era is also likely to be affected by the following phenomena:

- The majority of politically active elements will remain loyal to Islamic principles and the revolutionary legacy. These will call for various reforms, but largely within the context of Islam. Political change and shifts in personalities and loyalties are likely to continue to occur only within the Islamic framework. The ethnic minorities, westernized urban middle and upper classes, secular nationalists, leftists, and liberals are all expected to become more assertive and will continue to abhor Islamic authorities; however, these forces, with the possible exception of Mehdi Bazargan's Freedom Movement, will have little chance to prove their usefulness to the masses. Instead, substantial majorities of Iranians will continue to pin their hopes on Islam, but are likely to become even more ready to experiment and accept different versions of it. This mood may guarantee the survival of the Islamic regime; more important, it will open up new avenues for public acceptance of broad internal policy changes by Khomeyni's successors. In such circumstances, Islamic ideology may gradually become little more than a conservative rationalization of the interests of the ruling clerical faction.
- A successor regime will probably be very cautious in its domestic and international policies at first. Also it will clearly have a difficult time in consolidating itself; in particular, Khomeyni's successors will be hard pressed to harness the resentment of an economically deprived population. Many of the clerical factions may then become more autonomous. Moreover, internal political uncertainties coupled with socioeconomic problems may also prompt many factional leaders to seek foreign adventure as a way out.
- The strength of power centers in general will be measured first of all by the number of individuals they control rather than by

their stands on specific political issues. This factional infighting will necessarily be tempered by the knowledge that each depends on the collective survival of the other factions and that uncontrolled internecine struggle will eventually add to the collapse of the Islamic rule. If it does, it is impossible to know how events will then fall out. Political anarchy; extended civil war; a military takeover by the IRGC, the professional military, or both; a leftist dictatorship; and territorial disintegration cannot be ruled out then. In the short run, however, common fear, interests, and faith and beliefs among the current clerical establishment are most likely to prevent such outcomes.

- In the absence of Khomeyni, many factional leaders within the clerical network will initially prefer a weak, pliable government to a strong, independent-minded leader. Each will probably keep the political pot boiling and wait for the progression of events. All the factions, in the meantime, will watch each other closely for any sign of deviation from accustomed ideological positions. And each faction, at least for a time, will claim Khomeyni's legacy and pretend to be its most authentic interpreter. If one single faction gets too strong, most of the rest will coalesce and cut down its influence. In such a fluid situation, the most shrewd and ruthless manipulators among the key clerics will carry the day.
- As for the future direction and fortunes of specific factions in this period, they will all attempt to maneuver themselves into new and more popular positions; in the process, many of these are likely to alter their original political and social orientations and enter new and unforeseeable alignments. In the longer run, however, the political weight and status of contending factions will be affected by many recent regional and international developments that are already altering the regional political and security environment in the Middle East/Gulf region. Among these, the Iran-Iraq cease-fire alone has released a host of new factors that are likely to have a lasting effect on Iran's domestic political life. For example, the ruling clerics can no longer justify economic improvisation or austerity and must provide for radical social, economic, and financial reforms. Thus, to a larger extent than ever before, the future fortunes of many clerical factions may come to depend on their capacity to realize socioeconomic reforms promised all along.

CONDUCT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

Since coming to power, the ruling clerics have often based their international behavior on the ill-matched domestic bases of both turmoil and fixity. Such behavior will necessarily continue to reflect its revolutionary and Islamic character. Despite registering occasionally wide rhetorical swings, there is little likelihood that Iranian foreign policy will substantively change much from its present course of nonalignment and equidistance with regard to the superpowers.

Iran's international behavior and attitudes continue to reflect its Islamic revolutionary character. Outside powers are and will in the foreseeable future be judged by virtue of their support for or opposition to Iran's interests, especially in the Persian Gulf region. Also, neutralism with a distinct anti-American bias remains a central component of Iran's Islamic ideology and a serious obstacle to normalization. In the absence of Soviet behavior that was dramatically more threatening and hostile a few years ago, the clerics will not soon abandon their deep-seated hostility toward the United States. The reduction of American military presence in the Persian Gulf will reduce the anti-American passions of Tehran and probably remove some bones of contention, but the more basic conflict of interests created by the clerics' militant Islamic radicalism will be mitigated only when this radicalism is itself moderated.

Nonetheless, the long-term objective of U.S. policy should remain the reestablishment of some kind of working relationship with Iran to prevent it from sliding into the Soviet orbit and to discourage possible future efforts to achieve regional hegemony or destabilization. Iran remains the most important Persian Gulf state from the standpoint of population, economic and military power, and geostrategic location. Internal chaos or Soviet influence there would endanger the security of Saudi Arabia and other conservative states around the Persian Gulf. Thus, Iran's importance dictates that the United States rebuild some kind of position there.

At a time when official U.S.-Iranian relations are nonexistent, it is very difficult to specify desired U.S. political/economic policy toward Iran. At any rate, the following could be considered the basis of a prudent U.S. policy before and immediately after the Khomeyni's death. The United States should:

- Continue to remain truly neutral in the current Iran-Iraq negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, encourage the UN Secretary General's peace-keeping efforts, and urge further cooperation of all parties. In the meantime, any political, economic, or military steps that strengthen Iraq's position

with regard to Iran should be avoided. Such behavior will constitute a serious obstacle in efforts to reestablish ties. No matter who or what faction succeeds Khomeyni, Iranian perceptions of this issue are likely to remain unchanged in the foreseeable future. From the viewpoint of Tehran and for many years to come, it is impossible for any superpower to have truly good relations with both Iran and Iraq.

- Be open to overtures for better relations with Iran, particularly in the post-Khomeyni period, possibly through the intermediation of third parties such as Algeria and Pakistan. Meanwhile, avoid the use of threats or confrontational rhetoric toward Iran. Also recognize that Iranian support for terrorism may continue in the post-Khomeyni period. However, to preserve future opportunities with Iran, overt military retaliation against Iranian territory should be avoided except in the face of direct and clear-cut anti-American provocation.
- Avoid publicly supporting any particular Iranian emigre group, particularly those without a strong enough base of support inside Iran to affect internal politics. The United States should also recognize that attempts to create or organize an active opposition force inside Iran in current circumstances are counterproductive to overall U.S. interests: Such efforts are not only likely to end in failure but could further radicalize Khomeyni's successors against the United States and open up the prospects for closer Iranian cooperation with the Soviet Union. However, when and if such an opposition develops indigenously, the United States should be prepared to enter into communication with it to assess its response to U.S. security concerns.
- View the current political atmosphere in U.S.-Iran relations as a "transitional" era where various confidence-building measures could lay the ground for eventual resumption of ties. The United States can encourage this process by reaffirming U.S. support for Iran's territorial integrity and independence and pledging to assist in postwar reconstruction efforts currently underway in Iran.
- Encourage the broadening of economic, commercial, cultural, educational, and scientific ties with Iran by Japan, Switzerland, China, and NATO countries such as West Germany and Italy, which are currently well-positioned in Iran. This approach will not only limit and counterbalance the influence of Soviet-bloc countries in Iran, but will have the added benefit of strengthening potentially pro-Western elements in Iranian society.

V. EPILOGUE

Ayatollah Khomeyni died on June 3, 1989, 11 days after entering a hospital for abdominal surgery. Although Khomeyni's death left many ordinary Iranians stunned and uncertain about their future and that of their country, it did not catch the Islamic authorities unprepared. Ever since Khomeyni came to power, his would-be successors had always been concerned about who among them would rule after him. Indeed, only hours after the old man's death, the 83-member Council of Experts convened and heard Khomeyni's last "political statement" read out by his son Ahmad. To the surprise of many, his will contained no mention of any personal choice for his successor. Despite this difficulty, the Council named President Khamenei as the acting supreme spiritual leader of Iran by a two-thirds majority.

Khamenei's fairly smooth election can be considered a positive test of the Islamic Republic's constitutional arrangements; however, the election is no doubt a stop-gap measure undertaken by the leading clerics to give them time to prepare for the presidential elections scheduled for August 18, 1989. "We hope temporarily to be able to fill the leadership because the new terms of the Constitution are currently under review," admitted Khamenei immediately after his election.[1] Indeed, in the week before Khomeyni's death, the Iranian press was printing reports of the proceedings of a 25-member council on constitutional reform, which Khomeyni had appointed the previous April. The council is charged mainly with devising a plan for governing Iran after Khomeyni's death. But the plan is not scheduled to be ready until it is submitted to a popular referendum at the same time as the next presidential election.

Although Khamenei has at least temporarily inherited the position of Iran's revolutionary leader, his long-term survival in that role is anybody's guess. For the time being, however, Khamenei has emerged as one of the few Iranian clerics who can be expected to fill the political vacuum left by Khomeyni. Besides Khamenei, the men who, at least at the outset, will shape Iran's future are Rafsanjani, Khomeyni's son Ahmad, and Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi. Waiting in the wings are three other somewhat lesser contenders, ayatollahs Montazeri, Kheoiniha, and Ardabili. All of the primary contenders, in addition to their familiarity with violence, share several characteristics.

[1] *New York Times*, June 5, 1989.

They are middle-level Shia clerics and life-long Khomeyni loyalists and close followers. They also have common educational backgrounds and life-styles and faced persecution during the Shah's rule. In addition, they are all masterful politicians who have gained valuable experience since 1979 in running a complex country of over 50 million.

Reflecting the broad factional divisions of the clerical establishment, these men differ on the future course of the Islamic regime they jointly brought to power. These differences will at least in part determine the political dynamics of the immediate post-Khomeyni era.

As explained earlier, Majles Speaker Rafsanjani represents the pragmatic camp among the ruling clerical network's complex political spectrum. His standing will probably be decided in the upcoming elections. At present, he is the leading contender to succeed Khamenei in a much stronger executive type of presidency. Under Khamenei, the position was to some extent ceremonial. Rafsanjani has forged alliances with many pragmatic and hard-line power centers, consolidated his position of acting commander in chief among Iran's fractious military, and kept the backing of Iran's commercial sector.

Despite the seemingly contradictory positions on internal as well as foreign policy matters, Khamenei can be said to symbolize the pragmatic and moderate elements within the overall extremist category. Since about mid-1987, however, Khamenei has gradually mellowed further. Especially since the summer of 1988, he and Rafsanjani are widely credited with persuading Khomeyni and the extremists around him to accept the cease-fire with Iraq. Again, he has recently more than once suggested that Iran should be prepared to borrow foreign funds and import Western technology to help in reconstructing its war-ravaged economy.

Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, by contrast, is a leading extremist cleric. He is widely popular among those power centers that advocate government's tight control over the economy, Iran's continued isolation from the outside, especially Western, world, and devotion to the more revolutionary ideals of the regime. In addition, Mohtashemi is believed to have had a hand in the bombing of the U.S. Marine compound in Beirut in 1983. Along with many other sources of support, Mohtashemi derives power from his influence over the revolutionary committees that control Tehran's neighborhoods.

The last of the major contenders for power, Ahmadh Khomeyni, appears to be a man in the political middle. Although he is often considered in Tehran to be too inexperienced in government affairs and lacking in sufficient religious credentials, Ahmad nevertheless acted as chief of staff for his father for 12 years. During that period, he developed close alliances with many leading clerics; at the same time,

by siding with different factions at different times, Ahmad has become a major power broker.

Khomeyni's death came at a time when Iran's clerical establishment was still grappling with a host of domestic and international political and economic challenges that the July 18, 1988 cease-fire with Iraq had suddenly brought to the forefront. At home, the rebuilding of the shattered economy, demobilization of its huge army, and the fulfillment of the long-promised socioeconomic and political reforms are still awaiting urgent policy decisions. At the same time, a new political and security environment is already being shaped in the region. Khomeyni's death can be expected to further accelerate the emergence of the new regional environment. Khomeyni's successors will clearly have a difficult time consolidating themselves; they will also be hard pressed to turn their attention to domestic problems rather than engaging in bold foreign policy initiatives. Such an outcome may create further opportunities for Iraq to actively pursue its traditional rivalry with Syria; in the absence of Khomeyni, the conservative Arab monarchies may not hesitate to improve ties with his successors in Tehran, while the latter will most probably continue to actively encourage Arab divisions over territory and ideology. The Iraqi rulers have presented themselves in the recent past as victors to the Arab world, but no one really knows how ambitious Iraq will become in the coming years; and that scares conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf most.

The analysis of these and many other newly emerging developments is beyond the scope of this study, and it is premature to draw firm conclusions from these events. However, there is reason to believe these trends, if continued in the future, may once again bring into the open historical Arab differences that were temporarily buried in the course of the Gulf War. In turn, such a development may shatter the present regional security arrangements and provide Khomeyni's successors the opportunity for exporting the Islamic revolution or activating a new wave of Shia terrorism against their adversaries. Thus far, the regime in Tehran appears to be committed to political resolution of the Gulf conflict, to promoting domestic economic reconstruction, and to its new policy of bridge-building with the West. However, it is by no means clear that such measures represent a fundamental change in the long-term foreign policy objectives of the Islamic Republic; they may equally be designed to shore up the regime's political and military position in pursuit of its original radical Islamic and revolutionary goals. After all, it took the Bolshevik revolution nearly three decades to spread to east and west of Russia, and it took Castro two decades after he entered Havana to establish a beachhead in Central America.

Appendix

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY IRAN 1979–1989

1979

January 6:	The Shah announces his intention to leave the country and leaves Iran ten days later.
January 22:	Some 800 air force warrant officers declare loyalty to Ayatollah Khomeyni and revolt against their superiors at airbases in Dezful, Hamadan, Mashad, and Esfahan.
January 28:	Imperial Guard attempts to suppress disturbances at Tehran University; hundreds are killed or wounded.
February 1:	Khomeyni arrives in Tehran from France. Calls for resignation and arrest of Shapour Bakhtiyar, Shah's last Prime Minister.
February 9:	Military personnel at Doshan Tapeh and Farahabad airbases in Tehran rebel and side with revolutionaries. Detachments of Imperial Guard are sent to put down the rebellion. Suffering heavy casualties, they retreat the next day.
February 10:	Bakhtiyar leaves office and goes underground. The top military leaders declare the intention of armed forces not to stand against the revolution. Martial law is imposed in Tehran.
February 11:	Revolutionary forces capture most sensitive locations in Tehran. Mehdi Bazargan takes over as head of the provisional revolutionary government.
February 12:	The Soviet Union and United States recognize the new regime.
February 14:	Leftist revolutionaries take over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, U.S. Consulate in Tabriz,

	and the U.S. International Communications Agency. Led by Ibrahim Yazdi, pro-Khomeyni forces try to free American hostages, but fail.
February 14-18:	Protracted urban fighting between various leftist groups engulfs Tehran. The Mojahedin prevail.
February 15:	First series of executions of former military and civilian officials begin.
February 16:	Revolutionary forces take over Tabriz after three days of heavy fighting.
February 17:	PLO Leader Yasser Arafat arrives in Tehran for talks with Ayatollah Khomeyni.
February 18:	Iran severs diplomatic relations with Israel.
February 23:	The leftist People's Fedayin stage a rally in Tehran; over 100,000 people attend.
February 28:	Bazargan threatens to resign if self-styled revolutionary committees continue their activities.
March 4:	Iran breaks diplomatic relations with South Africa.
March 7:	Khomeyni imposes Islamic clothing requirements on women.
March 8-12:	Women march for five days in Tehran for women's rights and against dress restrictions.
March 13:	Iran announces intention to withdraw from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).
March 18:	The Kurds revolt against the regime in parts of Iranian Kurdestan.
March 27:	Turkomans rebel in the northeast.
March 30:	Voters go to the polls in a referendum to approve or reject the establishment of an Islamic republic; 97 percent of voters approve.
April 1:	Khomeyni declares victory in the referendum and proclaims April 1 "the first day of a Government of God."
April 7-13:	Thirty-one more former military and civilian leaders are executed.

April 21:	Large scale fighting breaks out between Azeri and Kurdish minorities in Naghadeh. Hundreds die in subsequent clashes.
April 26:	Calling for autonomy, Khuzestan Arabs engage in street marches.
May 5-9:	Firing squads execute 27 more high ranking former officials.
May 25:	Gunmen shoot and wound Hojjat ol-eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Tehran.
May 25:	Armed clashes between the followers of Khomeyni and leftists, mostly Fedayin members, occur in Tehran.
May 30:	The Arab population seeking autonomy in Khuzestan battle government troops in Khoramshahr.
June 8:	The government takes control of the private banks in the country.
June 25:	The government announces the nationalization of private insurance companies.
July 5:	Further nationalizations are announced. Industries assembling cars, ships, aircraft parts, and so on are affected.
July 9:	Khomeyni declares general amnesty for all people "who committed offenses under the past regime" except those involved in murder or torture.
July 18:	Iran cancels the construction of a natural gas pipeline that was to have supplied gas to the Soviet Union.
July 23:	Khomeyni bans the playing of all music on Iranian radio and TV stations because music is "no different from opium" in its effect on people.
August 2:	The Muslim People's Republican Party, made up of followers of Ayatollah Shariatmadari and the National Front, declare their intention to boycott upcoming elections for the national assembly.

August 10:	Government spokesmen announce Iran's cancellation of $9 billion in U.S. arms deal made by the previous regime.
August 12:	Islamic militants attack a demonstration called by the National Democratic Front. Subsequent clashes leave hundreds of casualties.
August 13-14:	Supporters of Khomeyni clash with leftists and liberal opponents of the regime in Tehran and in provincial cities.
August 16:	Kurdish forces seeking autonomy capture the town of Paveh near the Iraqi border from government troops.
August 17:	A number of previous regime officials, both military and civilian, are executed bringing the total number of executions after the overthrow of the Shah to 405.
August 20:	Twenty-two opposition newspapers, including that of the National Democratic Front, are ordered closed.
August 23-27:	guerrillas occurs in Mahabad and Saqez. Both sides suffer heavy casualties.
October 5:	The U.S. government announces the resumption of deliveries of aircraft spare parts to Iran.
October 14:	The Council of Experts approves the constitutional clause naming Khomeyni head of the armed forces, and giving him the power of veto over election of a president.
November 4:	Armed students protesting the presence of the Shah in the United States storm the U.S. Embassy in Iran and take American hostages.
November 5:	The Iranian government cancels the 1957 Treaty of Military Cooperation with the United States. The government also cancels the 1921 Treaty with the USSR, which granted the Soviet Union the right of military intervention in Iran.

November 6:	Bazargan's provisional revolutionary government is dissolved, and Khomeyni orders the Revolutionary Council to take over the government functions.
November 7:	The central committee of the Tudeh Communist Party announces its full support for the Revolutionary Council's assumption of power in Iran.
November 9:	Abolhasan Bani-Sadr is appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs.
November 12:	President Carter announces an immediate suspension of oil imports from Iran.
November 13:	Bani-Sadr announces that Iran would establish diplomatic relations with Libya.
November 14:	President Carter orders a freeze on official Iranian bank deposits and other assets in the United States estimated at $6 billion.
November 16:	Khomeyni grants amnesty to all criminals sentenced to less than two years in prison.
December 2:	The new Islamic Constitution is approved in a referendum.
December 5-7:	Armed clashes occur in the religious city of Qom between the supporters of Khomeyni and Shariatmadari.
December 9:	Khomeyni denounces the events in Tabriz as "rebellion against the rule of Islam." Students and militiamen loyal to Khomeyni recapture the TV station in Tabriz.
December 11:	Government supporters again clash with the Azerbaijani followers of Ayatollah Shariatmadari in Tabriz and elsewhere in Azerbaijan province.
December 13:	Ayatollah Shariatmadari voices his strong opposition to the constitution. Thousands of Azerbaijanis march through Tabriz and other towns

in support of Shariatmadari and against the Islamic constitution.

December 14: The Tehran radio announces that Iraqi forces had entered Iranian territory but were later forced back to Iraq.

December 22: A state of emergency is declared in Baluchestan in the face of local rebellion against the central government.

December 28-30: Gunfire in Tabriz continues between the supporters of Ayatollah Shariatmadari and forces loyal to Khomeyni.

1980

January 3: Protesting Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Afghan residents in Tehran attempt to storm the Soviet Embassy but are turned back by Islamic Revolution Guards.

January 4: Armed clashes between followers of Ayatollah Shariatmadari and forces loyal to Khomeyni again take place in Qom. In the meantime, insurgents in Tabriz occupy the government radio station.

January 6: Clashes between the opponents and supporters of Khomeyni continue in Tabriz. In the meantime, about 50 people are killed in clashes between Sunni and Shia Moslems in Baluchestan.

January 9: The Pasdaran fire on supporters of Shariatmadari during a demonstration in Tabriz.

January 11: Shooting again breaks out in Tabriz.

January 12: The Pasdaran capture the headquarters of Moslem People's Party in Tabriz.

January 19: A spokesman announces that 25 members of the air force had been arrested by the authorities in Tabriz on charges of plotting a coup against the regime.

January 25: Voters go to the polls to elect a new president.

January 28:	Abolhasan Bani-Sadr is elected president with 75.7 percent of the vote.
February 2:	Fighting between the government forces and Kurdish rebels continues in parts of Kurdestan.
February 9:	Fighting between Torkamans and government forces leaves 12 dead in northeastern Mazandaran.
February 11:	Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat arrives in Tehran and meets with Khomeyni at a Tehran hospital.
February 19:	Khomeyni appoints President Bani-Sadr Commander in Chief of the armed forces.
February 21:	Supporters of Khomeyni battle with members of the Mojahedin in Tehran and other cities. Clashes continue for the next few days.
March 14:	Voters go to the polls to elect a parliament.
April 7:	President Carter announces a series of sanctions against Iran.
April 8:	The United States sends messages to its European allies, urging them to join in an economic embargo against Iran.
April 18:	Clashes between Moslem fundamentalists and leftist students leave many casualties, especially in Shiraz, but also in Tehran, Esfahan, and Mashad.
April 20:	The Revolutionary Council orders universities to close down.
April 22:	Foreign ministers of the European Common Market vote unanimously to impose economic sanctions against Iran on May 17 unless progress is made to free the U.S. hostages.
April 23:	Clashes continue between supporters of Khomeyni and leftist students, especially in Ahvaz and Rasht.
April 24:	Fighting continues between government troops and Kurdish guerrillas in the town of Saqez.

April 24:	Iran concludes an agreement with the Soviet Union permitting importation of goods through the Soviet Union in case of a U.S. naval blockade.
April 25:	Mechanical malfunctions in some of the aircraft results in an order to terminate the U.S. rescue mission to free the hostages.
April 29:	A cease-fire is declared between Kurdish guerrillas and government troops in western Iran.
May 20-21:	According to the official Iranian News Agency, helicopters from Afghanistan cross into Iranian air space. In subsequent clashes the Afghan forces are forced to retreat.
May 23:	Military authorities in Tehran announce successful foiling of an attempted coup by a former general.
June 12:	Supporters of Khomeyni clash with members of the People's Mojahedin. Many people are killed in Tehran and other cities.
July 10:	It is announced that the government had smashed a plot by military officers to bomb the home of Ayatollah Khomeyni and other targets in Tehran and Qom.
July 14:	*New York Times* reports that firing squads executed 26 people, including a general, during the night.
July 16:	The government bans all travel into and out of the country for 48 hours in order to aid efforts to capture coup plotters.
July 20:	The Islamic Assembly elects Hashemi Rafsanjani as Speaker.
July 21-29:	Over 70 army and air force officers are arrested for plotting to overthrow the government. Some 30 of them are executed in the month of July.
July 31:	Twenty-four people, including 11 implicated in the coup plot, are executed in various cities.

August 8: Iran threatens to recall its ambassador from Moscow on the grounds that the Soviet Union is supplying weapons to Iraq for attacks on Iran.

August 11: The Majles approves the nomination of Rajai as Prime Minister.

August 28: Amnesty International announces that at least 1,000 people had been executed in the first 18 months after the Islamic Revolution.

September 17: President Sadam Hussein of Iraq announces that Iraq is terminating a 1975 border agreement with Iran because Iran has "refused to abide by it" and said that Iraq considered the Shatt al-Arab River totally Iraqi and totally Arab.

September 20: The Soviet Union announces the closure of its consulate in the city of Rasht.

September 22: Iraqi armed forces cross the Iranian border and invade Iran.

November 7: Former Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh is arrested by the revolutionary guards and taken to Evin prison.

November 10: After widespread demonstrations in the city of Qom for the release of the former foreign minister, Ghotbzadeh is released from prison.

1981

January 1: The Mobilization of the Oppressed is merged with the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps.

January 20: After prolonged negotiations between Washington and the Iranian authorities the American hostage crisis comes to an end when an Algerian plane leaves Tehran with 52 hostages for Wiesbaden, West Germany.

February 5: IRGC announces the establishment of a unit for the Islamic liberation movements, charged with establishing fraternal relations and contacts with movements fighting Western and Eastern Imperialism and Zionism.

February 17:	Kurdish rebels withdraw from Mahabad after two weeks of artillery bombardment of that city by government forces.
February 18:	Former Premier Bazargan and forty Majles members warn against street violence by fundamentalist mobs against their political opponents.
February 26:	35 intellectuals protest against torture of political prisoners and warn against the government's "consistent and increasing attacks on democratic rights and liberties.
March 6:	Street clashes between supporters and opponents of Bani-Sadr leave about 50 casualties in Tehran.
March 14:	Iraq declares readiness to support and arm Iran's ethnic minorities so that they could "achieve their national rights and establish neighborly relations with Iraq."
March 29:	PLO leader Arafat arrives in Tehran on a peace mission as a representative of the Islamic Conference.
April 9:	The Information Ministry orders printing companies not to print newspapers that lack a valid government license.
April 17:	Defying a ban on political meetings, the Fedayin hold a large rally near Tehran to commemorate the execution of their members during the rule of the former Shah.
April 19:	The government acknowledges that Iran has lost $56 million in a scandal involving funds for the purchase of arms in Europe.
April 27:	Iran notifies the United States of its readiness to begin negotiations with American companies seeking claims for damages in broken contracts.
May 2:	Iranian press agency PARS reports that scores of people are killed and injured in clashes between leftist Mojahedin and their opponents outside Tehran University.

June 2:	Authorities arrest a number of Bani-Sadr's staff and 15 others on counterrevolutionary charges.
June 7:	The newspaper *Islamic Revolution* put out by President Bani-Sadr is banned by the revolutionary prosecutor.
June 9:	Widespread rioting between the supporters and opponents of President Bani-Sadr erupts in Tehran streets.
June 10:	Ayatollah Khomeyni dismisses Bani-Sadr as commander in chief of the armed forces.
June 20:	Continuous armed clashes take place in Tehran and many other cities between supporters and opponents of Bani-Sadr.
June 21:	The parliament declares Bani-Sadr incompetent to govern. His arrest is ordered.
June 22:	Ayatollah Khomeyni formally removes President Bani-Sadr from office.
June 25:	A nationwide hunt is still underway for Bani-Sadr and his aides.
June 28:	Ayatollah Beheshti is killed by a bomb as he was speaking at the Islamic Republican Party headquarters. At least 71 other high-ranking politicians and government officials are also killed in the bombing. Among the dead are four cabinet members, six deputy ministers, and 20 parliament deputies.
July 11:	Five members of Mojahedin are put to death and 85 other members of that organization are arrested in Tehran.
July 15:	The Majles reelects Rafsanjani as its speaker for another term.
July 16:	The number of those executed on political charges since the ouster of Bani-Sadr reaches 200.
July 24:	Elections are held to name a president and to fill 46 Majles seats, many of them vacant because of the deputies killed in the June 28 bombing.

July 26:	Tehran radio announces that Rajai had received 12.2 million of the 14 million votes cast in the presidential elections.
July 27:	Tehran radio announces that Mojahedin central council member Mohammad Reza Sa'adati and 15 of his followers have been executed. Sa'adati was the most prominent of the approximately 250 people executed in July.
July 28:	The rationing of meat is initiated in Tehran.
July 28:	Deposed President Bani-Sadr, together with Mojahedin leader Masud Rajavi, arrive in France and are granted political asylum.
August 3:	The newly elected President chooses Education Minister Bahonar to serve as Prime Minister.
August 9:	Iranian news agency reports the execution of 19 people; this raises the number of those executed to 444 since the ouster of Bani-Sadr.
August 17:	According to Tehran radio, 23 more leftists are executed. According to Reuters, this raises to 500 the number of Iranians executed since Bani-Sadr was ousted.
August 21:	Over a dozen people are killed in Tehran clashes between Islamic Revolution Guards and Mojahedin.
August 30:	President Rajai and Prime Minister Bahonar are killed when a bomb explodes in the Prime Minister's office in Tehran.
August 31:	Tehran radio reports that 55 government opponents were executed on August 30th and 31st.
September 1:	The Majles approves Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mahdavi-Kani as interim prime minister.
September 1:	Hojjat ol-eslam Ali Khamenei is elected to replace the assassinated Bahonar as head of the Islamic Republican Party.
September 2-3:	Tehran radio reports heavy fighting in Tehran and many other Iranian cities between the

Islamic Revolution Guard Corps and the Mojahedin members.

September 12: Mohsen Rezai is appointed commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps.

September 17: Chief Justice Ardabili announces that demonstrators and political dissidents will be tried immediately upon arrest and put to death if two people testify against them.

September 23: At the start of new school year, Khomeyni calls for a purge of left wing students and teachers from the country's educational system.

September 27: Iranian news agency (PARS) reports that Iranian forces, in a major victory, have driven the Iraqis back across the River Karun from Abadan to Ahvaz.

September 27: Islamic Revolution Guard Corps announces that 59 people were executed, mostly in Esfahan, for crimes against the state.

September 28: Fifty-four people convicted of participation in the previous day's armed clashes against government forces in Tehran are executed.

September 29: Forty-three antigovernment activists are executed.

September 29: Defense Minister Musa Namju and armed forces chief of staff General Falahi are killed in a plane crash returning from the Iraqi front.

October 2: Presidential elections are held for the third time in Iran. The final election results show that Ali Khamenei received 16 million votes and was declared Iran's third president.

October 5: Tehran daily *Kayhan* reports the execution of 61 more people in Tehran, all prisoners at Evin prison.

October 7: Iran radio reports the execution of 37 members of the Mojahed in Esfahan.

October 10: Tehran radio announces the execution of 82 more people. Seventy-three of these were identified as members of the Mojahedin Khalgh.

October 14: Tehran radio reports that 20 "hypocrites" were executed throughout Iran.

October 28: The Majles by a vote of 115–39 with 48 abstentions approves the nomination of Musavi as the fifth Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic.

November 1: AFP reports that 21 people were executed in Iran during the previous four days.

November 6: Tehran radio reports a raid on the town of Bukan by the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Mojahedin guerrillas.

November 18: Ayatollah Khomeyni delegates broad appointive powers to Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri.

November 22: Prime Minister Musavi accuses the communist Tudeh party and the Mojahedin of infiltrating IRGC.

November 30: State television in Tehran announces the execution of 30 leftists.

December 14: The Majles approves the nominations of Valayati for Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Ali Akbar Nategh Nuri for Minister of Interior.

December 29: Radio Iran reports the arrest of 172 members of Mojahedin, Paykar, and Fedayin organizations in Tehran.

1982

January 28: Government forces restore calm in the northern town of Amol following intense fighting between antigovernment militants and the IRGC that left 66 people dead.

February 8: Security forces kill the ranking Mojahedin leader in Iran, Musa Khiabani.

March 4: Authorities announce the pardon of more than 10,000 prisoners following a general amnesty proclaimed by Ayatollah Khomeyni on the third

anniversary of the Islamic Republic's founding day on February 11.

March 6: According to Iranian newspapers, 17 leftists in three towns are executed for armed rebellion and membership in illegal organizations.

March 9: The Soviet paper *Pravda* publishes the first major commentary on Iranian-Soviet relations in two years; it warns about right-wing groups that endanger Soviet-Iranian ties.

March 12: Khomeyni appoints Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani to the Council of Guardians.

March 15: Khomeyni urges the depoliticization of the army and the IRGC.

March 16: According to the Iranian newspaper *Ettela'at* at least 37 people die in fighting between security forces and Kurdish rebels near Mahabad.

March 20: According to Tehran radio the Pasdaran kill 40 top leaders of the Fedayin Khalgh organization in various raids.

April 10: State-run radio confirms the arrest of the former Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh for allegedly plotting to assassinate Khomeyni.

April 16: A spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party announces that the government has begun a major offensive against the Kurds in the western part of the country. Meanwhile, Iranian radio reports 75 Kurds killed and 40 wounded in clashes with government forces.

April 17: AFP reports that about 1,000 people, including leading members of the clergy, were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to assassinate Ayatollah Khomeyni.

April 18: In a message on Armed Forces Day, Khomeyni appeals for an end to "discord among military personnel."

April 20: Ayatollah Shariatmadari is stripped of his religious title by the faculty at the theological school

in Qom for alleged complicity in a plot to assassinate Khomeyni. In the city of Tabriz, followers of Shariatmadari protest the move by public demonstrations and riots.

April 26: Thirty people were killed in fighting between IRGC and the Qashqai tribesmen in southern Iran during the previous week.

May 2: Fifty of the top Mojahedin leaders die in clashes between the Mojahedin and security forces in Tehran.

May 11: The Majles unanimously passes a bill nationalizing foreign trade.

May 12: Some 70 members of the leftist Paykar organization in Shiraz are arrested.

May 24: Authorities announce the execution of 50 more Mojahedin members.

June 22: IRGC reports the deaths of 14 Mojahedin members in Tehran.

June 29: The Tehran newspaper *Etella'at* reports that 46 people were killed when an army barracks belonging to IRGC in Mahabad was attacked by 200 Kurdish insurgents.

July 16: An 18-member Iranian economic delegation arrives in the People's Republic of China.

July 18: The Tudeh Party paper *Ettehad-e Mardom* is banned for its "clear opposition" to Islam.

July 30: According to government sources, 100 "counter-revolutionaries" are killed in an attack on the city of Sardasht in West Azerbaijan.

August 1: Tehran radio reports that 65 members of Mojahedin were killed or captured during raids in Tehran.

August 6: Turkish Prime Minister Ulusu and Foreign Minister Turkmen arrive in Tehran on an official visit.

August 8:	The Islamic prosecutor's office in Ahvaz announces that 300 members of the Mojahedin have been killed, wounded, or captured in Khuzestan alone since April 21st.
August 9:	Ayatollah Kani is replaced as the head of the Revolutionary Committee by Interior Minister Nuri.
August 16:	Iranian sources report the execution of about 70 officers allegedly connected with the plot planned by the former Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh.
August 19:	Tehran newspapers report the arrest of 100 people for complicity in an anti-government insurgency in Almol in January 1982.
September 12:	The paper *Islamic Republic* reports that six Mojahedin members were killed and four wounded in clashes with IRGC in Tehran.
September 16:	Former Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh is executed by firing squad in Tehran.
October 5:	Tehran radio reports the deaths of 100 "counter-revolutionaries" during "continuing purging operations" in West Azerbaijan.
October 31:	The guerrillas of the Kurdish Democratic Party capture the town of Bukan killing 80 government troops.
November 16:	Following Montazeri's suggestion about the need for active presence of clergy in the battlefronts against Iraq, 350 clergymen from Qom are sent to the front.
November 20:	Pakistan's Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan arrives in Tehran on an official visit.
December 8:	Libyan Foreign Secretary Abd al-Ali al-Ubaydi leads a delegation to Iran.
December 10:	Iranians begin voting for a Council of Experts to succeed Ayatollah Khomeyni.

1983

January 1:	A purge of Islamic tribunals and revolutionary courts begins with the dismissal of revolutionary prosecutors in the towns of Busher and Birjand.
January 2:	Algeria's Foreign Minister Ahmad Taleb Ibrahimi arrives in Tehran on an official visit.
January 4:	The Oil Ministry ends three years of gasoline rationing.
January 19:	The Soviet news agency TASS closes its Tehran office.
January 25:	Following a much publicized trial in Tehran, 22 members of the Union of Iranian Communists are executed.
February 7:	Tehran newspapers report the arrest of the Tudeh party head Nureddin Kianuri and two other communist officials on charges of spying for the Soviet Union.
February 13:	Khomeyni warns the Pasdaran and the professional army to "avoid factionalism and divisions."
February 14:	TASS reports that "reactionary elements" in Iran are working to undermine Soviet-Iranian ties.
February 28:	The Tehran radio announces the release of over 8,000 prisoners in a general amnesty.
May 4:	A government decree dissolves the Tudeh party. Iran expels 18 Soviet diplomats for interfering in Iran's internal affairs.
May 10:	IRGC commander in chief Mohsen Reza'i says over one thousand members of the disbanded Tudeh party have been arrested.
May 10:	The first Congress of the Islamic Republican Party convenes in Tehran.
May 27:	Majles speaker Rafsanjani says Iran desires normal relations with the U.S.S.R.

May 29:	West European, American, and Japanese leaders meeting in Virginia declare that the West should promote better ties with Iran.
June 12:	The Majles approves Islamic banking legislation.
July 9:	Iran closes the French consulate and cultural center in Esfahan.
July 11:	Hashemi-Rafsanjani is reelected speaker of the Majles at its opening session.
July 14:	The newly elected Council of Experts holds its first meeting in Tehran. Ayatollah Khomeyni announces he had prepared a 30-page will to be entrusted to the Council.
July 19:	In an address to the Council of Experts meeting in Tehran, Ayatollah Khomeyni warns that continuing discord among the clergy was harming the revolution and calls on the clergy to maintain unity and cohesion.
August 6:	Japan's Foreign Minister Shintario Abe begins a three-day official visit to Tehran.
August 16:	Prime Minister Musavi presents the first five-year development plan to the Majles.
August 23:	In an address to military personnel Khomeyni urges unity between the military and the IRGC and warns those who "create a rift" between the two forces.
September 19:	Universities reopen, many of them for the first time since April 1980.
October 3:	Former Tudeh Party Secretary General Kianuri and 17 other former Tudeh members appear on television to denounce their party's activities over the past 40 years.
November 28:	The Majles approves a bill turning the Construction Crusade into a formal government ministry.
December 6:	The trial of Tudeh members and sympathizers begins in Tehran.

December 24: The official press agency reports the arrest of 100 Mojahedin members.

December 31: The Soviet paper *Pravda* harshly criticizes Iran's leaders and the trial proceedings against Tudeh party members as "judicial farce."

1984

January 21: Some 87 Tudeh party members are given prison terms from one year to life and an additional 13 members are awaiting verdicts.

January 28: AFP reports that 300 Kurds have been killed by the IRGC in Kermanshah.

January 29: The trial of 32 Tudeh party members begins in the port city of Bushehr.

January 31: Speaking on the 5th anniversary of his return from exile Ayatollah Khomeyni warns of destabilization due to internal disputes. He calls on the armed forces to put aside internal differences and fight for Iran's victory against Iraq.

February 4: Three senior military officers belonging to the Tudeh party are sentenced to death in Tehran.

February 8: Amnesty International charges Iran with large scale abuses of human rights including over 5,000 executions since 1979.

February 25: Ten leading Tudeh party officials are executed in Tehran.

March 15: A revolutionary court in the town of Arak sentences 11 other Tudeh party members to jail terms from two to ten years.

April 15: National elections are held for the Islamic Majles.

May 17: Voting takes place for the second round of the Majles elections.

May 28: Hojjat ol-eslam Rafsanjani is reelected as Majles Speaker for the second time. Well over half the

members of the parliament are new faces and most of those elected are said to be radicals and "progressives."

June 15: Much stricter codes of Islamic dress and morality begin to be enforced in various cities.

July 22: West German Foreign Minister Genscher said at the end of a two-day official visit to Tehran that Iran wished to reestablish contacts with the West.

July 29: The government reports heavy fighting between its forces and Kurdish rebels in West Azerbaijan.

August 5: Prime Minister Musavi wins a parliamentary vote of confidence.

August 7: Twenty-five people are executed in Tehran bringing the total to more than 100 since late May.

August 26: Ayatollah Khomeyni urges a bigger role for the bazaar merchants in running the economy.

November 8: The Supreme Judicial Council designates special courts to deal with bribery, embezzlement, and fraud as part of a government campaign against corruption.

1985

January 24: Prime Minister Musavi begins a three-day official visit to Nicaragua.

January 25: Workers at industrial sites in Tehran and other cities go on a strike.

February 4: Asadollah Lajevardi, known as the butcher of Tehran for his role as revolutionary prosecutor in sentencing thousands of Iranians to death, is sacked by the government.

February 13: Prime Minister Musavi announces the government's decision to sell a number of state owned factories to the private sector.

February 16:	A strike by workers of the Iranian National Airline to protest regime surveillance of airline employees paralyzes air transportation to Iran.
March 7:	According to a Bahai observer 140 members of his sect had been executed in Iran and many others had been tortured and imprisoned since the revolution.
March 22:	A gathering in a mosque in Mashad to celebrate the Iranian New Year turns into a large demonstration against the regime.
April 14:	Antigovernment demonstrations break out in Tehran in protest against excesses committed by security forces against regime opponents.
April 17:	Scattered demonstrations occur in several cities calling for an end to the Iran-Iraq war. Authorities brutally crush most of these.
April 19:	Iran accuses Iraq of using chemical weapon troops on April 16 and 17.
April 24:	Ayatollah Khomeyni once again calls for unity between the professional military and the IRGC saying further divisiveness between them would ruin their chances for success at the battleground.
May 12-13:	Several bombs explode in Tehran killing about 20 people. No group takes responsibility, but officials put the blame on exiled opposition parties
May 17:	In response to an appeal by Paris-based former Premier Bakhtiyar, widespread demonstrations occur against the government and the war with Iraq in northern Tehran neighborhoods.
May 17:	Iraqi President Saddam Husayn calls for a one month cease-fire during the holy month of Ramazan. Iran rejects the offer.
May 18:	Saudi Foreign Minister Faysal begins an offical visit to Tehran. The visit is the first by a Saudi official since the Islamic Revolution.

May 20:	The Majles gives the peasants and squatters the right to keep parts of large estates they took over after the 1979 revolution but allows landowners who escaped redistribution to keep their lands.
May 26–June 16:	Iraqi planes and missiles repeatedly attack Tehran and many other Iranian cities. In retaliation, Iranian missiles hit Baghdad, while Iranian aircraft raid several Iraqi towns before a cease-fire called by Iraq effectively halts "the war of cities."
June 17:	Six Mojahedin members are executed in Tehran.
June 25:	Majles Speaker Rafsanjani returns to Iran after a five-day trip to Libya and Syria.
June 26:	Majles Speaker Rafsanjani leads a high-level delegation to the People's Republic of China to seek backing for Iran in its war with Iraq. Other envoys carry messages to Pakistan, India, Brazil, Cuba, Bangladesh, and Nicaragua.
June 26:	Over 100 "leftists," mostly members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, were killed or wounded in battles with the IRGC in Iranian Kurdestan.
July 2:	Speaker Rafsanjani meets with Japanese officials in Tokyo.
July 4:	Speaker Rafsanjani, in Tokyo, calls on the United States to take the initiative in restoring diplomatic relations with Iran.
July 7:	Hojjat ol-eslam Khoeiniha is appointed Prosecutor General of Iran by Khomeyni.
July 8:	The Soviet Union decides to withdraw its technicians from Iran, causing problems especially at the Esfahan power plant.
October 17:	President Khamenei appoints Hoseyn Musavi as prime minister.
October 28:	The Majles approves 22 members of Musavi's new cabinet but refuses to confirm the proposed Minister of Economy and Minister of Mines.

November 3-7: Several bombs explode in Tehran streets killing and wounding an unknown number of people. The government charges "American agents" with the responsibility.

November 23: Ayatollah Hoseyn Ali Montazeri is selected by the Assembly of Experts as Khomeyni's successor.

November 26: The government reports that over 8,000 former members of "counterrevolutionary groups" in Azerbaijan and Kurdestan had been pardoned.

1986

January 19: President Khamenei arrived in Luanda, Angola, at the beginning of an African tour, his first overseas trip since taking office in 1981.

February 16: A Tehran court closed Iran's daily economic newspaper, *Bourse*, in its 25th year of publication, because owner-editor Yusuf Rahmati was "not politically qualified."

February 17: A bomb exploded at a bus terminal in southern Tehran, killing one person and wounding six others.

February 24: Five French citizens, including an Embassy official, were arrested in Tehran.

February 26: AFP reported that two more French nationals had been arrested in Tabriz and would be expelled.

February 27: The Interior Ministry announced the expulsion of four French nationals on the grounds of espionage.

March 2: In a speech marking Women's Day, Khomeyni officially cleared the way for greater participation of Iranian women in public life, including military service.

March 15: Four guerrillas of the Paris-based leftist Mojahedin Khalgh had been executed in late February and early March.

March 22: Unemployment in Iran reached 15 percent.

April 3: Ayatollah Shariatmadari died of cancer in Tehran at the age of 87. He had been under house arrest for the past five years.

April 9: Two senior French diplomats arrived in Tehran to reopen contacts in the wake of the change of government in Paris.

May 1: Following a visit to Libya, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati held talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus.

May 15: The British Foreign Office said Iranian officials had barred a British diplomat from taking up his post in Tehran after Britain rejected the appointment of Hussein Malaik, a leader of those who seized the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979, as Iran's top diplomat in London.

May 20: A delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ali Reza Moayeri arrived in Paris on a three-day state visit, the first by such a high-ranking official since the 1979 revolution.

June 3: The Iranian press agency (IRNA) reported that French and Iranian officials began talks over repayment of a $1 billion loan by the late Shah to a European uranium enrichment consortium in 1975.

June 4: IRNA reported that Ayatollah Khomeyni had pardoned 163 prisoners, former members of "counterrevolutionary groups," to mark Jerusalem Day.

June 7: The French government expelled Masud Rajavi, leader of the banned left-wing group Mojahedin, who had been in exile in France since 1981. Rajavi flew to Baghdad, where he received a red-carpet welcome.

In a meeting with Iranian officials in Damascus, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad said Syria's ties with Iran were "strategic" and would be maintained in the interest of both countries.

June 15:	Iranian opposition leader Rajavi met with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and received promises of support.
	Majles Speaker Rafsanjani was overwhelmingly reelected.
July 19:	Former prime minister Bazargan, who recently established a new opposition group, was briefly kidnapped, and several of his associates beaten, possibly with official sanction.
July 25:	U.S. officials ordered the third-ranking diplomat in Iran's UN mission, Ali Reza Dayham, to leave the United States because of illegal activities.
August 3:	Col. Hosseyn Hasani-Saadi was appointed commander of Iran's Ground Forces, replacing Col. Ali Sayyid Shirazi, who became a member of the Supreme Defense Council.
August 5:	IRNA, Iran's official press agency, reported that a bomb in Tehran had killed one person.
August 7:	U.S. officials said an American arrested June 18 in Tehran on espionage charges was John Pattis, a telecommunications engineer.
August 16:	A car bomb killed 11 persons near a shrine in Qom.
August 19:	A car bomb in Tehran killed 20 people.
August 21:	A group calling itself "SYS" claimed responsibility in Athens for the recent bombings in Qom and Tehran.
August 25:	Following high-level talks in Moscow, Iranian officials announced they would resume exports of natural gas to the Soviet Union.
August 31:	Clandestine Free Voice of Iran radio reported antigovernment demonstrations in Shiraz following "barbarous" military recruiting efforts by the Revolutionary Guards.
September 5:	Reza Pahlavi, son of the late Shah, appeared in an unauthorized broadcast on Iranian television,

declared himself leader, and called for the overthrow of the government.

September 12: Tehran radio denied Reza Pahlavi had made any broadcast.

September 18: In Tehran, five doctors were sentenced to up to 18 months in internal exile for leading a strike in July.

September 26: Three men convicted of the Qom bombing were publicly executed there.

October 2: Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati said his government was holding talks with France on improving relations.

October 3: A Syrian diplomat was briefly kidnapped in Tehran.

October 8: The West German Embassy in Tehran was attacked by several hundred demonstrators following violence at a book fair in Frankfurt the week before.

October 26: IRNA announced the arrest on October 12 of Mehdi Hashemi, former head of the Global Islamic Movement and other associates of Ayatollah Montazeri.

October 28: Montazeri denied stories that he had resigned.

Prime Minister Mir-Hosayn Musavi declared that Iran had "thwarted a plot by the enemies of the

Revolution to force a compromise in the war with Iraq."

October 29: Iran and France agreed on the repayment to Iran of a $1 billion loan granted by the late Shah to the French Atomic Energy Commission.

October 30: Majles speaker Rafsanjani said that Ayatollah Montazeri is "our future leader."

October 31: President Ali Khamenei praised Ayatollah Montazeri.

November 4: On the seventh anniversary of the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran, Montazeri spoke at Qom saying "unity between the wings inside the Iranian regime is lacking."

November 8: Ahmad Kashani, a member of parliament, and several military men were arrested on changes of distributing seditious material.

November 23: Questions about the U.S.-Iran contacts raised in the Majles were withdrawn.

November 27: Manucheher Nikruz, the sole representative of the Jewish community in the Majlies, was arrested for moral turpitude.

December 1: *Izvestia* accused Iran of aiding the United States in an undeclared war against Afghanistan.

December 10: Mehdi Hashemi, arrested on October 12, confessed to murder, hoarding weapons, and collaboration with the Shah's secret services, according to Tehran radio.

December 12: Iran and the Soviet Union signed an economic cooperation protocol including cooperation in trade, banking, transport, steel mills, power generation, fisheries, and building.

1987

January 30: The United States made its release of $500 million in foreign Iranian assets conditional on an Iranian statement that the action would be unrelated to anything Iran might do regarding the release of U.S. hostages.

February 1: Idris Barzani, a leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, died of a heart attack in Iran.

February 4: Polish Foreign Minister Marian Orzechowski met in Tehran with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati.

February 10: Ayatollah Khomeyni spoke in public for the first time in almost 12 weeks saying Iranians demanded "war until victory" against Iraq.

February 11: President Ali Khamenei ruled out any speedy reconciliation with the United States in his speech marking the eighth anniversary of the revolution.

February 13: Foreign Minister Valayati met in Moscow with Soviet Foriegn Minister Eduard Sheverdnadze.

February 17: Iran expelled two West German diplomats and indefinitely closed its consulates in Hamburg and Frankfurt to protest a West German television program that was offensive to the Iranian leadership.

March 31: According to "informed sources," Mozaffar Baqa'i Kermani, leader of the outlawed Toilers Party, was arrested last week.

April 7: Parliament Speaker Rafsanjani said Iran would resume normal relations with the United States after it was sure the United States did not pose a threat to the Islamic Revolution.

April 21: Parliament Speaker Rafsanjani said that if the United States shows "good will" by releasing frozen Iranian assets, Tehran would try to mediate the release of American hostages in Lebanon. He added that U.S.-Iranian relations need not remain poor until "doomsday."

April 22: Iran sentenced American John Pattis to ten years imprisonment on charges of spying for the CIA.

April 23: The U.S. State Department publicly admitted to occasional contacts with the Mojahedin to keep abreast of events in Iran.

May 5: Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shara visited Tehran for high-level talks on bilateral and regional relations.

May 13: The United States returned to Iran $451 million in frozen assets after a May 5 decision by a Hague tribunal that it should do so.

June 1: Tehran rejected a Libyan request to return surface-to-surface missiles it had supplied.

June 2: With the consent of Ayatollah Khomeyni and Parliament Speaker Rafsanjani, the Islamic Republic Party ceased all activities. Rafsanjani said the IRP was no longer needed and that party polarization could lead to discord and damage national unity.

June 3: The Mojahedin claimed that Ayatollah Khomeyni issued an official decision appointing Ayatollah Montazeri "acting leader," which would not allow him to succeed Khomeyni as previously planned.

June 4: Britain closed the Iranian consulate in Manchester and ordered five diplomats to leave the country.

June 6: Iran ordered five British diplomats to leave the country.

June 11: Iran expelled four more British diplomats. Ten remain.

June 12: Foreign Minister Valayati arrived in Peking for a short visit.

June 14: Rafsanjani was reelected speaker of the Parliament for his eighth one-year term.

June 18: Four more British diplomats were recalled from Tehran leaving two, while London gave 15 Iranian diplomats until the end of the month to leave.

June 19: Masud Rajavi, head of the Iranian National Resistance Council, announced the formation of the Iranian National Liberation Army to overthrow the present regime.

June 30: Ayatollah Khomeyni approved regulations prohibiting Friday Imams outside Tehran from using Friday prayers for political campaigning.

July 4: Iran lifted its 5-day blockade of the French embassy.

July 17: France and Iran severed diplomatic relations.

July 23:	Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati arrived in West Germany on an official visit.
August 4:	While visiting Tehran, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov discussed with Iranian officials the building of oil pipelines, oil refining, and plans to build a railroad linking the Soviet Union to the Gulf.
August 11:	An Iranian pilot who deserted to Iraq and sought political asylum in Switzerland was gunned down by two men in Geneva.
August 15:	The "spiritual trial" of Mehdi Hashemi was reported to have begun in Tehran.
September 28:	In Tehran, Mehdi Hashemi was executed.
September 29:	After a report by the *Washington Post* revealing that Iran had become the second largest supplier of crude oil to the United States, the U.S. Senate voted to ban the import of Iranian crude along with other Iranian products.
October 7:	Fathollah Kazemzadeh and Reza Moradi, accused accomplices of Mehdi Hashemi, were executed.
October 16:	IRNA announced that Aeroflot had resumed flights betwween Moscow and Tehran.
October 26:	U.S. President Reagan announced a comprehensive embargo on U.S. imports from Iran and a ban on 14 kinds of "militarily useful" exports.
November 3:	Vladimir Gudev, the Soviet Union's new ambassador to Iran, presented his credentials.
November 4:	Two people were reported killed and 26 wounded when a bomb exploded in the northwestern city of Mahabad during anti-U.S. demonstrations marking the eighth anniversary of the storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran.
November 19:	The BBC reported Parliament Speaker Rafsanfani as saying that Iran and the Soviet Union were negotiating a "defense pact" and that he had accepted an invitation to visit Moscow.

December 2: A conference of liberation movements and Hezbollah groups convened at Tehran University. Those participating included representatives from Iraqi opposition parties, Kuwaiti and Lebanese Hizballah, and the Bahrian Liberation Movement.

December 3: Tehran radio reported that Iran and France were resuming diplomatic relations.

December 10: Ayatollah Khomeyni gave Iranian leaders two copies of his new "politico-divine last will" for sealing and safekeeping. The new will replaces one the ayatollah drafted five years ago.

December 23: The Council of Guardians expressed concern to Ayatollah Khomeyni that new powers given to state monopolies might endanger financial relations based on Islamic regulations.

December 27: "Suspicious and unidentified elements" attacked the Soviet consulate in Isfahan during protests marking the eighth anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Protests were also held in Tehran.

1988

January 7: In a letter to President Khamenei, Ayatollah Khomeyni said the government had the power to "unilaterally revoke any lawful agreements" that are "in contravention of the interests of Islam and the country." Khomeyni's letter was in part a rebuke of statements made by the president on the limitations of government.

February 6: The Ayatollah Khomeyni ruled that henceforth, a special "assembly" would be called upon to solve differences between the Majles and the Council of Guardians.

February 9: *Arab News* reported that former members of the banned communist Tudeh Party had established the Iranian People's Democratic Party in opposition to the government.

February 16: On the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, 989 prisoners in Isfahan and Yazd provinces were pardoned and 255 sentences commuted.

February 28: Turkey's Prime Minister Turgut Ozal arrived for talks.

March 6: In Tehran, thousands of rioters attacked the Soviet Embassy with rocks and firebombs. A similar attack was also carried out at the Soviet consulate in Isfahan. The impetus for the incidents was said to be news reports that the Soviets had sold Iraq the missiles with which they had been bombarding Tehran since February 29.

April 11: The Foreign Ministry was reorganized along the lines of three major geographical divisions with each section headed by deputy ministers.

April 12: Majles elections were held. A second round of voting was scheduled for May to fill approximately 80 seats.

April 13: Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati wrapped up a tour of Oman, the UAE, and Qatar.

April 15: Ayatollah Khomeyni approved the formation of an organization of "militant clergy" that is to exxpress an "independent opinion."

April 21: In Orumiyeh, Azarbayjan, one hundred members of the banned leftist Komeleh Party reportedly "surrendered" themselves to regime officials.

May 7: Ayatollah Khomeyni appointed Col. Ali Shahbazi, 42, chief of staff of the joint armed services. He was also promoted to brigadier general. He replaced Brig. Gen. Ismail Sohrabi who was appointed "military consultant" to the Supreme War Support Council.

May 13: Iranians went to the polls to vote in the second phase of Majlis elections to fill seats not occupied in the first round of elections held April 8. In April, those calling for more state control over

the economy made sizable gains though no faction won a majority.

May 18: The *Flag of Freemom* announced the establishment of the Organization of the Union of Iran's Military Personnel *(Sazman-e Ettehad-e Nezamian-e Iran)*. The address of the organization was given as Munich, West Germany.

June 2: Ayatollah Khomeyni appointed Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani commander in chief of the armed forces. In appointing Rafsanjani, Khomeyni instructed him to restructure and coordinate the armed forces.

In Tehran, Mehdi Bazargan, the first prime minister appointed by Ayatollah Khomeyni, criticized the ayatollah in an open letter accusing him of "a despotism worthy of the pharoahs" and of "collaboration with Israel."

June 3: AFP reported the arrest of a dozen "leading dissidents" following the publication of the Bazargan letter. The police arrested Hashem Sabaghian, former interior minister, former finance minister Ali Ardalan, and former Tehran mayor Mohammad Tavassoli.

AFP reported that several people had been killed in preceding weeks in clashes between moderates and radicals in Isfahan, Mashhad, Qom, and Tabriz.

June 4: Commander in Chief Rafsanjani said efforts were underway to establish a "comprehensive general command headquarters" to consolidate all branches of the armed services. He also said that the IRGC would not be abolished but salaries and the ranking structure would be regularized.

June 7: Hashemi Rafsanjani was reelected speaker of the Majlis.

June 16: Iran and France restored diplomatic relations five weeks after the release of the last three

French hostages held in Lebanon. Relations were severed in July 1987.

June 25: Ayatollah Khomeyni decreed Hojatoleslam Shaykh Mohammad Yazdi a member of the Council of Guardians. Yazdi succeeds Council secretary Lotfollah Safi.

June 29: The Council of Guardians elected Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani as its new secretary.

June 30: The Majles reinstated Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi by a vote of 204 to 8 with 5 abstentions.

July 6: Britain and Iran reached a final agreement on compensation for damages to each other's embassies in Tehran and London.

July 8: The *New York Times* reported that Iran approached the United States in April apparently requesting face-to-face meetings with U.S. officials.

July 13: The Council of Guardians overruled a Majles draft decision of July 12 that exempted Prime Minister Musavi from introducing his cabinet to the assembly for a vote of confidence.

July 18: Iran officially accepts the UN Resolution 598; the war with Iraq comes to an end. Canada announced that Ottawa and Tehran had agreed to restore diplomatic relations. Relations were severed in 1980 when it was revealed that Canadian diplomats in Tehran had helped smuggle six Americans out of Iran.

July 19: FBIS reported than an Iranian delegation visited Paris earlier in the month and asked French officials to lift their embargo on Iranian oil.

July 21: Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi presented the Majles with his 21 ministers.

July 25: A $1.18 billion industrial and trade protocol was signed with Romania.

July 26: Majles Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Iran would assist in releasing U.S. hostages in Lebanon if the United States agreed to return Iran's frozen assets. The United States said the proposal was "unacceptable."

August 1: Seven Mojahedin-e Khalgh members were hanged in public in Bakhtaran.

Khomeyni called for the creation of a government committee including the prime minister to lead the reconstruction effort.

September 5: President Ali Khamenei rejected the resignation of Prime Minister Musavi who feared that at least eight members of his cabinet would not receive a vote of confidence from the Majles, and his policies for reconstruction would be rejected.

September 6: Prime Minister Musavi withdrew his resignation after Ayatollah Khomeyni rebuked his action stating that it was no time for bickering and resigning.

September 7: Prime Minister Musavi sent a letter to President Khamenei, which, according to *Le Monde*, explained the "real reasons" for Musavi's attempted resignation. In the letter he complained of his lack of control over foreign policy and operations carried out in the government's name that were not known or ordered by Tehran.

September 12: IRGC Minister Mohsen Rafiqdust received a vote of no confidence from the Majles as did Education Minister Kazim Akrami and Agriculture Minister Abbas Ali Zali. Their failure to gain approval left six of 21 ministry portfolios vacant, the other three being construction jihad, energy, and commerce.

September 24: Gholamreza Foruzesh, construction jihad minister, said Iran had just completed testing the "largest and longest range domestically manufactured missiles" and was preparing to mass produce them.

September 25: The *New York Times* reported "Iranian experts" as saying that the government had decided to place under the army's charge all weapons research and development operations formerly under the IRGC.

September 28: AFP reported that Iranian officials had in the recent past repeatedly asked former president Abolhassan Bani Sadr to return to Tehran but that he declined the offers.

September 29: Two Kuwaiti diplomats arrived in Tehran to reopen the embassy there. Nicosia radio reported that Cyprus and Iran had agreed to establish diplomatic relations.

September 30: British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe announced that Britain and Iran would resume diplomatic relations and that full ties would be restored "in due course."

October 1: Ayatollah Khomeyni issued a decree allowing his son, Ahmad, to compile his father's published and unpublished works to prevent "distortion."

October 5: The Amnesty International reports that at least 158 people were executed in Iran in 1987; "although the true figure was probably higher."

October 6: Commander in Chief Rafsanjani said the IRGC had to reorganize and observe "all the principles and yardsticks of a disciplined military force." He added that the IRGC would assist the Armed Forces.

October 12: The *Washington Post* reported that West German officials encouraged the United States to take advantage of the climate in Tehran and make a renewed effort to better ties. The West Germans expressed willingness of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to assist in the release of hostages in Lebanon.

October 16: The Majles approved its first five-year development plan to take effect March 1989.

October 18:	President Khamenei outlined Iran's reconstruction policy at a Tehran press conference.
October 20:	The Consultative Council for Reconstruction held its first session chaired by President Khamanei.
	Speaker Rafsanjani said that efforts were under way to merge certain sectors of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.
October 23:	Information Minister Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri said political parties would be allowed to operate freely as long as they did not conspire against the government.
October 24:	Majles Deputy Kalkhali called for the restoration of place names changed during the revolution.
October 26:	Rafsanjani appointed former IRGC minister Mohsen Rafiq-Dust as a military adviser.
	Ayatollah Kashani was reelected speaker of the Council of Guardians.
	Rafsanjani told Hungarian Prime Minister Karoly Grosz that Iranian-Soviet relations could possibly be expanded since the war with Iraq had ended and the Soviets were withdrawing from Afghanistan.
November 1:	The Economic Council approved the Five-Year Plan.
November 2:	A UN Commission on Human Rights report said that serious human rights abuses continued in Iran. Between August 14 and 16, 860 executed political prisoners were removed to the Behesht Zahra cemetery.
November 8:	*Abrar*, a morning daily, resumed circulation after a nine-month closure.
November 10:	Britain and Iran resumed diplomatic relations.
November 18:	In Ahvaz, Rafsanjani said Iran should drop its "previously crude diplomacy to avoid making enemies."

November 19: Deputy Foreign Minister Besharati said Iran was willing to talk with Saudi Arabia about overcoming the "great misunderstanding" created by the 1987 hajj incident.

November 20: A gas supply agreement was signed with the Soviet Union in Moscow.

November 22: AFP reported that 18 people, mostly supporters of Ayatollah Montazeri, were executed the preceding week. Some 200 Montazeri supporters were supposedly arrested. The action was seen as a consolidation of power by Rafsanjani and retaliation for the supporters' leaking the Montazeri letter criticizing the state of the country.

November 24: *Radio France International* reported the resumption of relations with Morocco.

November 27: West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher arrived for talks.

November 28: In an open letter, Ayatollah Khomeyni said the Majles was to hold sole legislative powers and that other law-making institutions created during the war would be dissolved if their duties duplicated those of the Majles.

IRNA reported that six "pseudo-ulema" were executed in November after being found guilty of corruption.

November 30: *Iran's Flag of Freedom* reported that 31 Tudeh Party members had been executed. Of those, 4 were from the Politburo and 3 from the central committee.

A UN committee voted not to change the wording of a resolution condemning Iran's human rights practices.

December 1: Speaker Rafsanjani said Iran was exploring ways to utilize foreign exchange reserves to back growth projects either through long-term credits or "on buy-back."

December 2: President Khamenei said that the constitution contained certain "defects" and "vague points" that needed correction. As an example, he cited the need for provisions to resolve deadlocks between the Majles and the Council of Guardians. He said a central assembly was needed to define the country's policies.

December 4: Britain reopened its Tehran embassy.

December 5: The Council of Expediency announced a law to take effect Jan. 21 making the death sentence mandatory for anyone caught with more than an ounce of drugs or smuggling more than 11 pounds.

December 12: Amnesty International charged Iran with having executed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people since June 1988 for political reasons. Three hundred executions were confirmed.

December 17: Speaker Rafsanjani said US-Iranian relations could not be restored because public opinion was not ready for such a move. He added that the decision could only be made by Ayatollah Khomeyni.

December 21: It was reported that the Majles approved a tax bill designed to distance the "private sector from the booming service industry."

December 29: New punishments were passed for civil servants found guilty of taking bribes, embezzlement, and fraud.

December 31: Ayatollah Khomeyni ordered the Council of Expediency to relinquish its decree-making powers, now that the war had ended, and concentrate on settling disputes between the Majles and the Council of Guardians. Khomeyni issued the statement in response to a letter signed by 104 Majles deputies asking his views on the council.

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Newspapers and Periodicals

The following is a partial list of newspapers and periodicals, mostly in Persian, utilized in the course of this study.

al-Majallah, Weekly in Arabic, London
al-Towhid, bi-monthly in Persian, Tehran
Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
ARA, (organ of the anti-Khomeyni "Iranian Liberation Army") bi-weekly in Persian, Paris

Archives Européennes de Sociologie
Bours, (moderate centrist) weekly in Persian, Tehran
Conflict Studies, quarterly in English, London
Enghelab-e-Eslami (published by former President Banisadr) weekly in Persian, Paris
Ettela'at (pro-government, centrist) daily in Persian, Tehran
E'tesam (organ of pro-government Islamic Societies), monthly in Persian, Tehran.
FBIS/MEA, SAS & SA, *Daily Report*
Financial Times London
International Iran Times (independent) weekly in Persian and English, Washington DC.
International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
Iran Liberation (News Bulletin of the People's Mojahedin), bi-weekly in English
Iran Press Digest, weekly, London
Iran Press Service, bi-weekly in English, London
Iranian Studies, quarterly in English, Boston
Jebhe (organ of anti-Khomeyni "National Movement of Iran"), bi-weekly in Persian, London
Jahad (organ of the Reconstruction Crusade), monthly in Persian, Tehran
Journal of American Oriental Society
Jomhuriy-e Eslami (former organ of the IRP) daily in Persian, Tehran
JPRS/NEA, *Near East/South Asian Report*
Kayhan Havai, weekly in Persian, Tehran
Kayhan International, weekly in English, Tehran
Kayhan (nationalist/monarchist) weekly in Persian, London
Kayhan (pro-government), daily in Persian, Tehran
Kayhan Farhangi, monthly in Persian, Tehran
Liberation, weekly, Paris
Los Angeles Times
Mellat (organ of Pan-Iranist Party), monthly in Persian, Paris
Middle East Journal
Middle East Report
Middle Eastern Studies
New York Times
Nejat-e Iran (organ of now-defunct Front for Liberation of Iran), weekly in Persian, Paris
Omid-e Enghelab (organ of the IRGC Basij), bi-weekly in Persian, Tehran
Pasdar-e Eslam (published by Theological Seminaries of Qom), monthly in Persian, Qom

Payam-e Enghelab (organ of the IRGC), bi-weekly in Persian, Tehran
Payam-e-Iran (monarchist) weekly in Persian, Los Angeles
Rah-e Roshangari, (reflects views of the Hojatiyeh Society) irregular in Persian, Tehran
Raha'i, monthly in Persian, Tehran
Resalat (conservative) daily in Persian, Tehran
Shahed (organ of the Martyrs Foundation), monthly in Persian, Tehran
Sobh-e Azadegan (reflects views of the IRGC), daily in Persian, Tehran
State, Culture, and Society, quarterly in English
Studia Islamica
Survey, quarterly in English
The American Behavioral Scientist
The Economist
Middle East Economic Digest, London
The Middle East, monthly in English, London
Vahid, monthly in Persian, Tehran